A NEW and PRACTICAL

EXPOSITION

OF THE

APOSTLES CREED,

WHEREIN

Each ARTICLE is fully explained,

The moſt material OBJECTIONS ſtated and anſwer'd,

And a proper DISSERTATION, to illuſtrate the Whole, annex'd to each SECTION, and fitted for the Uſe of private FAMILIES.

TOGETHER

With an INTRODUCTION containing a ſhort hiſtorical Account of the Deſign and Origin of CREEDS.

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MDCC XLVII.

BRITISH MUSEUM

APOSTLES' CREED

EXPOSITION

THE

PREFACE.

BEFORE I come to the *Introduction*, wherein I propoſe to give the Reader a ſhort *hiſtorical* Account of the *Deſign* and *Origin* of *Creeds* in general, and of the *Nature* and *Compoſition* of what we call the *Apoſtles*, in particular, it may not be improper to acquaint him, firſt, from what *Motives* and *Reaſons* it was, that, at firſt, I undertook this *Expoſition* of it; ſecondly, by what *Helps* and *Aſſiſtances* I have been enabled to proceed in it; and thirdly, in what *Order* and *Manner* I have endeavoured to perform it; that thereby I may, in ſome Meaſure, plead my Excuſe for attempting a *Work*, that, in the Eſteem of ſome, did vaſtly ſurpaſs my Abilities, and make my *Apology* to the Publick, for troubling them with a *new* Treatiſe upon a Subject, which, by a great *Variety* of Authors (as many ſuppoſe) had been *ſufficiently* handled already.

I. *Why the Author undertook a new Expoſition of the Creed.*

I have always thought, that the general *Corruption* of Manners, ſo viſible in the Lives of *Chriſtians*, did *originally* proceed from their *Unbelief*. Men could not, Men durſt not give themſelves up to *work Wickedneſs with all Manner of Greedineſs*, were they ſtedfaſtly perſuaded, that there is a God, whoſe Power is infinite, and whoſe *Wrath* is like a *conſuming Fire*; that this God (*a*) *ſent his Son into the World, to redeem them from all Iniquity, and to purify to himſelf a peculiar People zealous of good Works*; that he ſent his bleſſed *Spirit* into their Hearts, to ſanctify their Wills and Affections, and (*b*) *to purge their Conſciences from dead Works, to ſerve the living God*; and that (*c*) *he hath appointed a Day, wherein he will judge the World in Righteouſneſs*, and when every one ſhall *receive according to his Works*, (*d*) *the Wicked go into everlaſting Puniſhment, and the Righteous into Life eternal*: Were Men, I ſay, but fully convinced of the Truth of theſe few *Articles*, and had the Remembrance of them fixed continually upon their Minds, it could not fail of giving a different Turn to their Lives and Converſations, by making them, upon all Occaſions, fearful of *offending* that divine Majeſty, who, under various *Views*,

a is

(*a*) Tit. ii. 14. (*b*) Heb. ix. 14. (*c*) Acts xvii. 31. (*d*) Matt. xxv. 46.

is the *Creator* of their Perſons, the *Preſerver* of their Beings, the *Redeemer* of their Souls, the *Sanctifier* of their Natures, and who, at the laſt Day, is to be their merciful or inexorable *Judge*. But the Misfortune is, that the *Commonalty* of Chriſtians, having received their Religion as the *Temper* of their Climate, or the *Entail* of their Anceſtors, are very little ſolicitous to enquire into its *Contents*; and, though they may repeat their Creed (as the Cuſtom is) in the publick *Liturgy*, yet, upon Examination, they appear as ignorant of almoſt every Article of it, as if they were born *Pagans*; whilſt others, of better *Capacity* perhaps, but equal *Unconcernedneſs*, look upon the Creed, as a *Syſtem* of ſublime *Theology*, ſecluded from the Knowledge of the *Vulgar*, and appropriated to the Profeſſion of the *Stewards of the Myſteries of Chriſt*, to whom they, accordingly, leave it. It is no uncommon Thing with ſome, upon a ſlight Enquiry into the Matter of their Faith, meeting with *Difficulties*, that they cannot ſurmount, or ſome ſeeming *Inconſiſtences*, that they cannot well reconcile, to reject the whole, as a Set of *inexplicable* Propoſitions; whilſt others, finding it impoſſible to reduce ſome Articles to their beloved *Scheme* of making *Chriſtianity not myſterious*, whatever is *refractory*, and will not comply with their Purpoſe, they utterly explode, as a Doctrine full of *Abſurdities*, and impoſſible to be true: And from hence it comes to paſs, that, as the Articles of our Faith come to loſe their Eſteem, and to be conſidered as no *Eſſentials* of the Chriſtian Religion, the *Reſtraints*, which they would naturally lay upon Men's depraved Appetites, are ſure to be withdrawn, and they ſuffered to run into all Manner of Wickedneſs, without Controll.

How it comes to *fare* ſo hardly with our Creed, to the great Advancement of Infidelity, and Irreligion amongſt us, may, in a great Meaſure, be gathered from the *earneſt* Endeavours of ſome Writers to depreciate *Faith*, and extol the *Sufficiency* of Reaſon, as a *competent Guide* in Matters of Religion, and from the *uncommon* Pains, that have been taken curiouſly to *delineate the Religion of Nature*, which (however intended by their Authors) can hardly fail of having an *evil Aſpect* upon the *Efficacy* of our Belief, and the *Neceſſity* of a divine *Revelation*. The *Schoolmen*, by their bold and daring Speculations upon ſome of the moſt *abſtruſe Myſteries* of our Faith, have given Occaſion to ill-minded Men to think unworthily of the Creed itſelf, if not to diſbelieve it; becauſe they find their Expoſition of ſome Articles (eſpecially the *Generation* of the Son, and the *Proceſſion* of the Holy Ghoſt) ſo intermixed with Fancies and Conceits of their own: And, in Prejudice taken at theſe Men's Raſhneſs, ſome of our *later* Divines, whenever they come within the *Confines* of any of theſe great Doctrines, and cannot, with Decency, think of declining them, do generally handle them ſo lightly, ſo very *ſuperficially*, as if they were afraid (one may ſay) of burning their Fingers by a cloſer Compreſſion, which muſt needs give the Reader ſome Umbrage to think, that what he finds ſo ſlightly paſſed over, muſt, of Courſe, be a Matter of no great Conſequence. Our moſt *modiſh* Sermons (for a *Mode* there is in preaching, we find, as well as dreſſing) are in the main nothing elſe, but *moral Eſſays* upon Subjects, as far remote from any *Article* of Faith, as poſſible; and ſuch,

as would better become the Mouth of a *Seneca*, or an *Epictetus*, than a *Labourer in the Goſpel*, whoſe Stile, at leaſt, ſhould ſavour of the *Oracles of God*, and *(e) whoſe Speech, and whoſe preaching ſhould not be with enticing Words of Man's Wiſdom, but in Demonſtration of the Spirit, and of Power.*

How our *Expoſitors* of the Apoſtles Creed have acquitted themſelves, will beſt appear from what follows: I need only obſerve, at preſent, that, when ſuch a *Diſplay* of Learning (as appears in moſt of them) is thought no leſs than neceſſary, to ſettle and adjuſt the Senſe of every Article, the Inference muſt needs be—that *ſuch Knowledge is too great, and excellent* for every common Reader, *he cannot attain unto it*; and yet every common Reader has a Soul to be ſaved, as well as the greateſt *Scholar*, and a Soul, that muſt be ſaved *(f)* by its *Faith* in *the Son of God, Chriſt Jeſus*, to which a proper *Explanation* of the Matters, contained in his Creed, cannot fail of being highly conducible. I have therefore always thought, that, if a Treatiſe of this Kind were comprized in a reaſonable *Compaſs*, and, in its ſeveral Parts, reduced to ſuch a *Proportion*, as neither to be *redundant*, nor *defective* in the Expoſition of any *material* Point: That, if this *Expoſition* were made with a ſtrict Regard to the *plain* and *ſimple* Meaning of each Article, without indulging any *nice* Queſtions, or *needleſs* Speculations about the *Modes* of ſuch Myſteries, as are utterly inexplicable; that, if in it, the *Proofs* from Scripture were, all along, confirmed by the Voice and Teſtimony of *Reaſon*; the *Objections*, which Infidelity has, at any Time, raiſed, were ſingled out, and ſet in *Array*, and their reſpective *Anſwers* ranged in their proper Strength and Order to confront them, ſo that no *Scruple* or Difficulty might reſt upon the Mind of an *impartial* Enquirer; and that, if the *Matter* of all this were delivered in a plain and perſpicuous *Stile*, without the Intermixture of learned *Quotations*; and digeſted into ſuch a *Method*, as might make every Thing appear eaſy and familiar to Perſons of an ordinary Underſtanding: I have often thought, I ſay, that ſuch a Deſign, competently well executed, would be of ſingular Uſe to *retrieve* the Credit of our Creed, by making the Doctrines, contained in it, more intelligible, and, with the Bleſſing of God, a powerful Means, if not to convince the *Diſputer*, and ſilence the Gainſayer, at leaſt to ſtrengthen the Weak, ſettle the Wavering, ſatisfy the Doubtful, confirm the Strong, and, in ſome Degree, to edify and improve good Principles in all, that, *(g) in the Unity of the Faith, and the Knowledge of the Son of God*, they may happily *come unto a perfect Man, unto the Meaſure of the Stature of the Fulneſs of Chriſt.*

WHAT the *Ancients*, or what ſome *later* Authors have written of this Kind in the *learned* Languages, comes not ſo properly within the Compaſs of my *Scheme*. The Divines of *neighbouring* Nations are not reported to have done much in this Way; nor was there any Thing worth reading, that appeared among us, till ſome conſiderable Time after the *Reformation*. Bp. *Babington*, who wrote in the Reign of Q. *Elizabeth*, ſpeaks of ſeveral, who had gone before him in the Expoſition of the Apoſtles Creed, but *his* is the firſt, I have met with, that merits

(e) 1 Cor. ii. 4. (f) John iii. 36. (g) Eph. iv. 13.

merits our Notice; and yet, as it is formed by Way of *Queſtion* and *Anſwer*, it ſeems to be intended for the Inſtruction of *Minors*, more than the Edification of the *Adult*, though it certainly abounds with *difficult Queſtions* (which are not ſo pertinent in ſuch a Work) and with *Latin* Fragments, and Quotations (as the Manner of writing then was) and is indeed, upon the whole, conſidering its *Contents*, not ſo properly an Explanation of the *Creed*, as a Confutation of *Popery*.

Dr. *Jackſon*'s two firſt *Volumes* are a large and learned *Comment* upon this Creed; but the Compaſs he takes, in aſcertaining the *Nature* of Faith, in vindicating the *Authority* of the Scriptures, in explaining the *Grounds* of Juſtification, and tracing the *original* of Unbelief; in anſwering the *Objections* of the *Romiſh* Church, and interſperſing many *miſcellaneous* Things, which to an unattentive Reader may look like ſo many wide *Digreſſions*; in ſhewing too much of his *metaphyſical* Knowledge, in ſome *curious* Queſtions concerning the *Exiſtence* of God, his *Nature*, and *Attributes*, and the Works of his *Creation*, and *Providence*, together with his long and elaborate Explication of the *Melchizadecal Prieſthood*, makes the Work a *Storehouſe* for a *Divine*, upon theſe, and the like Subjects to have Recourſe to, but a Treatiſe not ſo proper to be recommended to the Peruſal of the *Illiterate*.

Dr. *Heylyn*, in *his Sum of Chriſtian Theology*, has, in like Manner, tranſcended the Capacity of the Vulgar; and, beſides the Doctrine of *Chriſt's local Deſcent into Hell*, and the Apoſtles *actual Compoſition* of the ſeveral Articles of the Creed, in the ſame Form, wherein they have been tranſmitted to us (in which two Points he ſeems to be miſtaken) his *Enlargements* upon the Creation and Offices of Angels, the Nature of juſtifying Faith, the Salvation of *Heathens*, and *(h)* other *polemical, and philological Diſputations*, (as he calls them,) together with his inceſſant *Run* againſt *Popery*, and unneceſſary Mixture of *Greek* and *Latin* Scraps and Sentences, make his Compoſition fit only for thoſe, who, in the Apoſtle's Phraſe, *(i) have need of ſtrong Meat*; who, being Maſters of Reaſoning, and Languages, have their Faculties *exerciſed* that Way; and not for thoſe, that are but in their *Childhood*, and do therefore deſire *(k) the ſincere Milk of the Word*, or an Expoſition of it, as ſimple as poſſible, *that they may grow thereby*.

The learned *Barrow*, whoſe Cuſtom it was to *exhauſt* every Subject, has two Treatiſes upon the Creed; one, in the Form of *Sermons* (which is thought the more conſiderable) and the other by the Way of *Expoſition*; but, beſides that they are viſibly borrowed, almoſt Word for Word, from one another, the *Head*, or firſt Beginning of the *former*, which treats of *the Evil, and Unreaſonableneſs of Infidelity*, and *the Virtue, and Reaſonableneſs of Faith, of juſtifying Faith, and of Juſtification by Faith*, &c. ſeems vaſtly diſproportionate to the *Body* of the Expoſition, and makes the whole not ſo integrate and uniform: And beſides, that, how *proper* ſoever his *Diction* may be, (though allowed, in ſome Inſtances, to be *obſolete*) his *Periods* are confeſſedly too long, and, by the frequent Occurrence of *Parentheſes*, his Senſe not always ſo perſpicuous, as might be wiſhed; he ſtands moreover obnoxious to what we have hitherto cenſured in others, the *Diſplay* of too

(*h*) See his Preface. (*i*) Heb. v. 12. (*k*) 1 Pet. ii. 2.

too much Learning in his Compoſition, even though his own Sentiments of the Matter be theſe, *viz.* "that *(l)* the *ancient* Teachers of our "Religion, both, as being themſelves Men not ſeen in *Subtlety* of "Speculation, nor verſed in *Niceties* of Speech (uſed by Men of Art "and Study) and as deſigning chiefly to inſtruct the Generality of "Men (the greateſt Part being ſimple and groſs in Conceit) did not "employ Terms, deviſed by human Wiſdom for extreme *Accuracy*, "and Diſtinction, but expreſſed their Conceptions in the moſt *vulgar*, "and beſt underſtood Language."

Dr. *Edwards*, in *his Body and Subſtance of the Chriſtian Religion*, has taken an infinite Deal of Pains; for in it (as himſelf informs us) *(m) there is no Head of Divinity, that is not treated of; no conſiderable Queſtion, that is not anſwered; no uſeful Controverſy, that is not decided; no dangerous Error or Hereſy, that is not detected, and confuted*; and therefore his Work ſeems properly to be calculated, *(n)* more for *profeſſed Candidates in the Study of Theology*, than for the Improvement of thoſe, that have not a competent Share of human Learning, how great ſoever their *Love* and Veneration *for divine Knowledge* may be. It is a noble *Magazine*, wherein a great Variety of Things are ſtored together; but then, as he was a Man of much *Vivacity*, full of Matter, an haſty Writer, and one, willing to follow his *Genius*, wherever it led him, his Tranſgreſſions againſt *Method*, in the whole, and *(o) Proportion*, in its ſeveral Parts (to ſay nothing of his *affected Negligence* in Point of Stile, and frequent *Repetition* of the ſame *Thought*, though in ſomewhat a different Dreſs, in the ſelf ſame *Paragraph*) are but too remarkable, and makes him not altogether ſo agreeable to a curious Reader; as others perhaps may take juſt Offence at his *Earneſtneſs* in advancing *Calvinian* Doctrines, and eſpecially that of *Predeſtination*, *(p) which* (according to him) *is one of the brighteſt Demonſtrations of the Truth of the Divine Attributes, eſpecially of thoſe two grand Properties of the Divine Being, his Mercy, and his Juſtice.*

Far am I from being pleaſed with myſelf, whilſt I am making theſe *Remarks* upon the *Defaults* of ſuch Authors, as have gone before me in this Subject, and therefore I chooſe to omit many; only the learned Bp. *Pearſon*'s Expoſition is a Work of ſuch *general* Eſteem, and by moſt accounted ſo *complete* and perfect in its Kind, that I muſt not paſs it by without ſome Obſervation. Now how *complete* ſoever ſome have thought it, I am not the firſt Perſon, that has found Defects in it: For, "whoever conſults it upon the Subject of "God's Omnipotence, *(q) ſays one*, will be far from finding this At-"tribute treated of after ſuch a Manner, that there is nothing wanting "to give us a more perfect Idea of it, or to ſatisfy all the *Diffi-"culties*, which may ariſe in our Minds concerning it." *Omnipotence*, as it implies *authoritative Power*, and *abſolute Dominion*, which is the Senſe, the Bp. takes it in, as it *firſt* occurs in the Creed, ſhould neceſſarily imply, one would think, God's *Providence* in the Government of the World, and have given a fair Opportunity of diſcuſſing his other *Attributes*, which are required in the *Adminiſtration* of it,

(l) Vol. I. p. 360. *(m)* See his Preface. *(n)* See his Preface and Title Page. *(o)* On Article I. he expends 280 pag. and on the IX. 230. *(p)* See his Preface. *(q) Fiddes* in his Preface, p. 28.

and are properly the only *Demonſtration* of the divine *Eſſence*, which, in itſelf, is *inviſible*, and *incomprehenſible*. But of neither of theſe has he thought proper to give us any particular Account, though, without all peradventure, it would have been much more inſtructive, than to ſpend (*q*) ſo many Pages in the Expoſition of the Words, *I believe*; than to be ſo very tedious (not to ſay trifling) in (*r*) his *Derivation* of the Word *Joſhua*, and (*s*) the forced *Parallel*, that he runs between that *Prince*, and the bleſſed *Jeſus*; In his (*t*) *hiſtorical* Account of the *anointing Oil*, and the prevailing Cuſtom of it, both among the *Jews* and *Gentiles*; in his long (*u*) *Notations* upon the Word *Lord*, and Obſervations upon the (*x*) Name *Mary*, though himſelf acknowledges that there was nothing peculiar in its *Origination:* Not to ſay, that his *Diction* is apparently too much latinized, and his *Manner* of expreſſing himſelf not ſo clear and perſpicuous, as one would think, conſidering, that he is certainly no Enemy to *Circumlocution:* For, what by telling us (by Way of *Apparatus*) what he intends to do upon every *Topick*, that he comes to, and then, by telling us again (by Way of *Recapitulation*) what he has actually done, he waſtes a conſiderable Part both of his own, and his Reader's Time, as Dr. *B. Kennet*, beyond all Controverſy, has ſhewn, by reducing his *Folio Book*, upon the Omiſſion of theſe *Redundances*, to a very ſmall *Octavo*, and yet, not only retaining every *material* Thing, that he has ſaid, but (*y*) *adding* likewiſe *the Sentiments of ſome of our Engliſh* Divines upon the ſame Subjects. His *Notes* indeed, wherein he makes a fine *Parade* of Learning, are (as (*z*) himſelf tells us) ſeparated from the Body of the Book, for the better Convenience of vulgar Readers; but the Misfortune is——that, when a vulgar Reader takes up the *Volume*, and looks into it, he preſently ſtands amazed, that ſo much *Latin* and *Greek*, and other *oriental* Languages ſhould be neceſſary to the Explanation of the *firſt Elements* of Chriſtianity, and ſo he ſhuts the Book again, and goes away perſuaded, that the Creed, like the *Ark of old*, contains ſomething in it too ſacred, too tremendous to be *touched*, much more to be *looked into* by common People, with Impunity.

THUS *conſcious* of the great Neceſſity of Faith in Chriſt, and *grieved* at the Occaſions given to the *Growth* of Infidelity, very *zealous* for the Credit, and better Underſtanding of the *Creed*, and not ſo well *ſatisfied* with the *Commentaries* that were already made upon it; notwithſtanding the Difficulties, that I laboured under, more and greater, than I am willing to tell the *Publick*, I ſet myſelf reſolutely to compoſe a *new one*, which might be of more general Uſe, and better adapted to common Comprehenſions; and this I did, in Reliance on the *Divine Aid*, and Confidence of ſuch *Helps*, and *Aſſiſtances*, as were happily provided to my Hand, but unknown to thoſe, that have gone before me in this Subject. The Foundation of a *Lecture* by that incomparable Perſon, *the Honourable Rob. Boyle* Eſq; *for the Proof of the Chriſtian Religion, againſt notorious Infidels, Atheiſts, Deiſts, Pagans, Jews, and Mahometans*, &c. gave Riſe to ſeveral Courſes of Sermons,

II. *What* Helps *he made uſe of.*

(*q*) 15 Pages. (*r*) See p. 69. (*s*) p. 76. (*t*) p. 97, &c. (*u*) p. 145, &c. (*x*) p. 169.
(*y*) See his Preface. (*z*) Ibid.

Sermons, preached by ſome of our greateſt Divines, and now publiſhed in three large *Folios*, wherein *(a) the Certainty and Neceſſity of Religion in general*; *(b) the Inſufficiency of Reaſon, and Want of divine Revelation*; the true *(c) Characters, and Sufficiency of a ſtanding Revelation*; *(d) Demonſtrations of the Being, and Attributes of God*, from various Topicks; *(e) Confutations of Atheiſm, and all its Objections*, from ſeveral Arguments; *(f) natural Obligations to believe the Principles of Religion*; *(g)* the *Cauſes of modern Infidelity, and its Unreaſonableneſs*; a full *(h) Demonſtration of our Lord's being the true Meſſias*; *(i)* the *particular Excellency of the Chriſtian Religion*; *(k)* The *Credibility of the Myſteries*, contained in it; and the wonderful *(l) Wiſdom of God in the Redemption* of loſt Mankind, together with many other material Points, are diſcovered, ſtated, proved, explained, and illuſtrated in a Manner, that no other Nation or Language can boaſt of.

ANOTHER *Lecture*, founded and encouraged by the late worthy and pious Lady *Moyer*, *in Defence of the Divinity of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, gave Occaſion to ſome worthy Divines ſince that Time, from ſeveral *Paſſages*, both in the *Old* and *New* Teſtament, as well as the Writings of the *ancient Fathers* of the Church, to ſhew, that *(m)* there is in Reality, a *Plurality* of *Perſons* in the *ſame* divine *Eſſence*; that *(n)* this *Plurality* is not *inconſiſtent* with the *Unity* of the Godhead, when rightly underſtood; that *(o)* the *Son* and the *Holy Ghoſt* are *co-equal*, and *co-eternal*, with the *Father*, and wherein their *Subordination* to him does conſiſt; that the Son's Divinity, in particular, is manifeſt *(p)* from the Works of *Creation*, and Redemption; from the divine *Titles*, *Attributes*, and *Offices* aſcribed to him; the Oblation of our *Prayers*, and the Adminiſtration of *Baptiſm*, required in his Name; and that the *Incarnation* of this Son of God in the *Perſon* of our bleſſed Saviour is apparent, *(q)* from the *Evidences* of the Religion, he taught; the *Miracles*, he wrought; the *Redemption*, he effected; and the *Satisfaction*, he made to God for Man's Tranſgreſſions: All theſe fundamental Points, together with an *(r) hiſtorical Account* of the Oppoſition, they have, all along, met with; proper *Anſwers* and *Solutions* to ſuch *Objections*, and *Difficulties*, as have, at any Time, been raiſed againſt the *Catholick* Senſe of them, and *(s)* a *Vindication* of our Creeds, as well as of the Church's *Explications*, and *Definitions* concerning them, have been excellently well ſet forth, and ſupported with great *Authority*.

THESE two *Performances* contain a vaſt *Fund* of Materials; the *former*, with Regard to the *firſt*, and the *other*, to the *ſubſequent* Articles of the Creed; but, beſides theſe, in Relation to *both*, I am ſingularly beholden to ſome *particular* Authors, which I cannot paſs by, without acknowledging the Obligation. *(t)* A. Bp. *Tillotſon*, Dr. *Whitby*, and *(u)* Dr. *S. Clarke*, in their ſeveral Sermons, had treated of the *divine Attributes* with Sufficiency enough, until the *Diſcourſes* of

(a) Bp. *Gaſtrel.* *(b)* Dr. *Berriman.* *(c)* Bp. *Williams*, and *Blackhall.* *(d)* Dr. *Clarke*, and *Derham.* *(e)* Dr. *Bentley* and *Harris.* *(f)* Bp. *Leng.* *(g)* Dr. *Woodward.* *(h)* Bp. *Kidder.* *(i)* Bp. *Bradford.* *(k)* Dr. *Stanhope.* *(l)* Dr. *Turner.* *(m)* Dr. *Knight* and *Trap.* *(n)* Dr. *Waterland.* *(o)* *Wheatly* and *Waterland.* *(p)* Dr. *Waterland* and *Knight.* *(q)* Mr. *Seed.* *(r)* Dr. *Berriman.* *(s)* Dr. *Trap* and Mr. *Wheatly.* *(t)* Vol. II. *(u)* Vol. I. and II.

of the ingenious and learned *Abernethy, concerning the Being of God, and his natural and moral Perfections*, appeared amongſt us, which, in my Opinion, both for *Sublimity* of Thought, and *Pureneſs* of Diction, have quite excelled any Thing, that went before them, in any Language, that I know; and are indeed, in all Reſpects, ſo very tempting, that an Author, when treating of the ſame Subject, can hardly forbear making free (as I acknowledge myſelf frequently to have done) not only with his *Sentiments*, but with his *Language* likewiſe.

The incomparable Bp. *Bull* (with the *additional Notes*, and *Obſervations* of the learned Dr. *Grabe*) in his *Defence of the Nicene Creed*, has ſtrenuouſly aſſerted, *the Son's co-eternal and conſubſtantial Exiſtence with the Father*, and made it abundantly appear, that the *Judgment of the Catholick Church for the three firſt Centuries*, as well as *the primitive and apoſtolick Tradition*, was, that our Lord Jeſus Chriſt is *very God of very God:* and, as certain *later* Writers of no mean Note among us, had endeavoured to revive the *Hereſies*, which this *Prelate*, when alive, ſo vigorouſly oppoſed, our Happineſs was, that, even then, there were not wanting able *Aſſerters* of the Chriſtian Cauſe, and that not only among theſe, who were by Authority appointed to that Office (whereof *(u)* the great *Vindicator of Chriſt's Divinity*, and of the other *Fundamentals of our holy Religion*, ſeems to be the *Chief*) but even among ſome, who being never *dignified* or *diſtinguiſhed* by any ſuch *Call*, in a Country Cure, and under an Exile, as it were, from the *Republick* of *Letters*, have lived and died in ſuch *Obſcurity*, that their very Works now (though the beſt, I think, in their Kind) ſeem, in a Manner, to be forgotten. The Perſon, that I have now, more eſpecially, under my Conſideration, is one, to whom I am greatly indebted for the Help and Aſſiſtance, I have received from his *Labours*, upon ſome of the moſt *difficult* Articles of the Creed, I mean, the happy *Imitator* of Bp. *Bull*'s Manner of Writing, the learned Mr. *Stephens*, M. A. once *Fellow of Exeter College in Oxford*, but who never attained to any higher Promotion in the Church, than the laborious *Cure*, of being *Vicar of St. Andrews* in *Plymouth*, where he died. His *Talent* indeed was, to cloath the moſt ſublime *Myſteries* of Religion in ſuch a plain and ſimple Dreſs, as might make them familiar to every ordinary underſtanding; and accordingly, from the moſt obvious Senſe of the Scriptures, as well as the Teſtimony of the Ante-Nicene Fathers he has proved, beyond all Contradiction, *(x)* The *divine Perſons* in the Trinity to be *one God by an Unity of Nature*; our Saviour to be *one God with the Father by an eternal Generation from his Subſtance*; *(y)* the divine and human Nature to be *perfectly united in his own Perſon*; *(z)* the *holy Ghoſt to be a Perſon, diſtinct from both Father and Son*, and yet of the *ſame Eſſence with both*; and (what is no ſmall Confirmation of theſe Doctrines) that *(a)* all the *Anti-trinitarian Schemes, which differ from the Senſe of the Catholick Church* in this Reſpect, are *irrational in themſelves, and inconſiſtent with Scripture.* But I muſt repreſs myſelf, and here tell my Reader once for all, that, whatever *Materials*, I was acquainted with, I have

(u) Dr. *Waterland* *(x)* Serm. before the Univerſity of *Oxford.* *(y)* At a triennial Viſitation.
(z) Before the Univerſity. *(a)* Viſitation at *Plymouth.*

I have freely employed to my Purpoſe, and, to make ſome Compenſation for my own Want of *Invention*, have roved about, and, wherever I met with a proper *Ingredient* for any Part of the Work, *induſtriouſly* gathered it, and brought it Home ſafe to the *common Hive*: But, in what Manner I afterwards *diſpoſed* of it, and, by Degrees, have wrought it up into the *Conſiſtency*, wherein it now adventures to appear in *public*, I have only this one Thing more to inform him of, and then I have done.

III. *And in what* Manner *he has performed it.*

As it is a *Shame*, as well as a Matter of *dangerous* Conſequence, for any one, that calls himſelf a *Chriſtian*, to be ignorant of the Senſe of his Creed, which is really the *Symbol*, or Badge of his Profeſſion; ſo I have endeavoured, as far as the *Dignity* of my Subject would permit me, to accommodate my *Expoſition* to the Capacity of the *Generality* of Readers. *Plainneſs*, and *Perſpicuity* more eſpecially, (which moſt of my *Predeceſſors*, I think, have neglected) I have taken Care to obſerve moſt religiouſly; inſomuch, that I do not remember, there is one *foreign* Word of any Kind, I am ſure not one *Sentence* of *Latin*, or *Greek*, or any other Language unknown to the Vulgar, within the Compaſs of the whole Book. My *Matter* which, with no ſmall Pains, I have collected from the Labours of others, I have chiefly put in my own *Dreſs* and *Diction*, except when a *Citation* appeared neceſſary for the Proof, or Illuſtration of any *diſputed* Point, and, by this Means, I have avoided that *Inequality* of Stile, ſo frequently complained of, and yet apt to be incurred by thoſe, who are *Compilers* of other Men's Sentiments. As the *Creed* itſelf is a very *methodical* Compilation from Scripture, in my Attempt to explain it, I have digeſted the *Materials*, belonging to each *Article*, under their proper *Heads*, and have introduced them into the ſeveral *Parts* of the Expoſition, either as their Nature, their Dignity, or the Order of Time ſeemed to point out their Place, which not a little contributes to the *Perſpicuity* of the *whole*. As ſome *Articles* are of greater Compaſs, and conſiſt of more *Branches*, than others, I have attempted to reduce the ſeveral *Diviſions* to as near a Proportion, as poſſible, by omitting unneceſſary *Annotations* on Texts, pruning off *Luxuriancies*, and reſtraining myſelf from all Manner of Digreſſions, which greatly contributes to the *Uniformity* of the Work.

THE *Expoſition* itſelf is built upon the Authority of *Scripture*, ſupported by Arguments drawn from *Reaſon*, and confirmed by the *Teſtimony* of the ancient Writers of the Church. *The Objections* are ſuch, as our *modern* Unbelievers have either revived, or invented; and I choſe to *range* them by themſelves, becauſe they would be apt to break the *Thread* of the Diſcourſe, if inſerted in the *Body* of it; and to give them their full Force and Strength, becauſe our Religion, I am confident, ſtands upon a ſure *Bottom*, and does not fear the briſkeſt *Attacks*, or the moſt ſubtle Arguments, that can be formed againſt it. *The Anſwers* are likewiſe placed *ſeparately*, in a continued Series, to ſucceed each other; and though they do not exactly follow in the ſame *Order*, wherein the Objections are ſtated, becauſe the *Connexion* betwixt Anſwer and Anſwer makes ſometimes an Alteration; yet the Reader may aſſure himſelf, that each Objection has received an *adequate* Reply, and ſufficient to ſatisfy all, except it be thoſe, *(b) in whom the God of this*

(*b*) 2 Cor. iv. 4.

World hath blinded their Minds, leſt the Light of the glorious Goſpel of Chriſt, who is the Image of God, ſhould ſhine unto them.

The *Diſſertations* are either *Parts*, or *Appendages* to the *Expoſition*, which, had they been *there* explained, and illuſtrated, as their Subject Matter required, muſt have *ſwelled* the Article to an immoderate Size, and made a Kind of *Protuberancy* in it; but now, by being removed, and placed by themſelves, there is the leſs Fear of *dilating* them beyond Meaſure; and, as they are generally wrote in a freer and more *rhetorical* Manner, than what goes before them would bear, they may poſſibly give an agreeable *Relaxation*, or *Refreſhment* to the Reader's Mind, when he comes from the *melancholy* Work of anſwering the *Cavils* of Infidelity.

In the *Recapitulation* of what has been ſaid upon each Article, I have been as brief, and ſuccinct, as poſſible; and have but *barely* mentioned (what others have ſo largely inſiſted on) the *practical Duties*, that reſult from thence; becauſe (as I take it) though they are very good *Inferences*, they are, properly ſpeaking, no *Part* of the Expoſition of our Creed; and, (for the greater Eaſe, and leſs Perplexity of the Illiterate) I have removed into the *Notes*, the Conjectures of the Learned, concerning the Time of each Article's *Reception* into the *Body* of the Creed, all Arguments of a more *abſtruſe* and *metaphyſical* Nature, and ſuch Expoſitions of Scripture-paſſages, as are known to depend upon any Part of *critical*, or *philoſophical* Learning.

This is the *Form* of the Book; and this is the *Subſtance* of what I had to communicate to the Reader concerning it. If I have done any Thing, that may be of Uſe to *confirm* his Faith in the great Articles of *Chriſtianity*, I have my End, and, of him, the only Reward, I deſire for my Labour, is, that he would be pleaſed ſometimes to remember me (a ſinful Man) in his Addreſſes to *the Throne of Grace*; and, (for his own Sake,) to put in Practice the Apoſtle's good and wholeſom Advice, of (*c*) *adding to his Faith, Virtue; and to Virtue, Knowledge; and to Knowledge, Temperance; and to Temperance, Patience*; &c. *For, if theſe Things be in him, and abound, they will make him, that he will he neither barren, nor unfruitful in the Knowledge of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.*

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(*c*) 2 Pet. i. 5, &c.

THE

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INTRODUCTION.

The ſeveral Faculties *of the Soul.*

THE *Soul* of Man we generally allow to be a *ſimple* and *undivided* Subſtance, in all its Operations *one* and the ſame, though, for our better Conception of it, we uſually inveſt it with ſeveral Powers and Properties, *viz.* that of the *Underſtanding*, whereby it not only *apprehends* Objects, as they lie before us, (*a*) but is led likewiſe to *judge* of their Nature, by *comparing* their mutual Relations; that of the *Will*, which determines our Operations by Way of *Choice*; and that of our *Affections*, which are always ready to purſue, or avoid what the *Underſtanding* propoſes, and the *Will* makes her Option or Averſion: But of theſe, what we account the moſt eminent and *Godlike* Faculty, is that of the *Intellect*, for (*b*) *there is a Spirit*, ſome Thing exalted above *Matter*, *in a Man (*ſays *Elihu) and the Inſpiration of the Almighty giveth him Underſtanding.*

God's Right of directing them, eſpecially the Underſtanding.

Now if God ſo plainly declares himſelf to be the *Creator* of the Souls of Men, and the *Giver* of all their Faculties, there is no Doubt to be made, but that he has an abſolute *Power* and Controll over them; an inconteſtible Right to *preſcribe* ſuch Matters of *Inſtruction* to our Underſtanding, ſuch Rules of *Conduct* to our Wills, and ſuch Motives of *Obedience* to our Affections and Appetites, as he finds moſt convenient for our Nature and Circumſtances. The *Underſtanding*, in particular, he has placed in the Soul, as he has the *Eye* in the Body, to be a Guide and Monitor to us upon all Occaſions; and therefore it would but badly become his divine *Attributes*, to ſuffer this leading Faculty, (for Want of Inſtructions from above) to fall into *Ignorance*, or Confuſion, as it certainly will do, if the Supplies of theſe be either denied or withheld from it: For ſuch is the meaning of our Lord's Similitude, (*c*) *the Light of the Body is the Eye, therefore when thine Eye is ſingle*, free from all Obſtructions, and in a right Diſpoſition to receive the *Rays* of the Sun, *thy whole Body alſo is full of Light; but if thine Eye be evil*, troubled with any ſore Diſtemper, that impairs its Nerves, and impedes its Sight, *thy whole Body alſo is full of Darkneſs.*

By a particular Revelation, *which was highly* neceſſary.

MAN indeed, in his State of *Integrity*, had no Reaſon to complain of ſpiritual *Blindneſs*. His *Underſtanding* was large, and capacious, and fully illuminated by the divine *Spirit*. His conſtant Intercourſe with the Deity inſtructed him in every Thing, that he deſired to know; and his Will and Affections ſtood ready, at all Times, to obey the ſovereign Dictates of his Mind. But, upon his *Fall*, and Defection from God, *Reaſon*, that had the Rule before, was in a great Meaſure depoſed; the *Will* grew perverſe and obſtinate, the lower *Faculties* fell into a State of *Rebellion*, and ſo (*d*) *the War between the Law in the Mind, and the Law in the Members* immediately commenced, and has ever ſince continued. With Relation to Knowledge more eſpecially,

(*a*) *Nereis*'s Account of Reaſon and Faith. (*b*) Job xxxii. 8. (*c*) Luke xi. 34. (*d*) Rom. vii. 23.

ally, *Man is born like a wild Aſs's Colt:* his (*e*) *Underſtanding is darkened, his Mind alienated from the Life of God, through the Ignorance, that is in him*; and, were it not for the divine Prevention, he would, every Moment, *(f) fall into the Snare* of his ſpiritual Enemy, and (as the State of the *heathen* World teſtifies) *be taken captive by him at his Will.*

In this Condition, though we muſt not ſay, that God was obliged to make a particular *Revelation* of his Will to Mankind, yet, conſidering their manifold Wants and Neceſſities, and his abundant Mercy and Goodneſs, we have Reaſon to preſume, that he would, at one Time or other, have Compaſſion on their Blindneſs, and Degeneracy, and, accordingly, make Uſe of ſome *Means* to reclaim them from the *Error of their Ways.* For we can hardly think it conſiſtent with his Wiſdom and Goodneſs, to create Man, and, when he chiefly wanted *Help*, to leave him to himſelf, either to follow his own *Inventions*, or to be expoſed to the Aſſaults of an implacable ſubtle Enemy, without any *Caution* or Inſtruction given, or any *Aſſiſtance* or Protection afforded him, for his Defence. (*g*) Nor can we ſuppoſe, that a God, who declares himſelf to be a *jealous God, that will not give his Honour to another*, ſhould ſuffer the World to continue in ſuch groſs *Idolatry*, as to *offer their Sons and Daughters to Devils*, and, * in their ſeveral *Rites*, and Forms of Worſhip, to commit all Manner of *Lewdneſs* and *Beſtiality*, without concerning himſelf to vindicate his own Honour, by putting a ſtop to ſuch Wickedneſs, and opening the Eyes of his poor deluded Creatures.

And how to be adjuſted.

To accommodate his *Diſpenſations* therefore to the ſeveral Exigences of Mankind, it was requiſite, that God (whenever he thought proper to make a *Revelation*) ſhould have regard, not only to Men's *Immorality*, but their *Ignorance* likewiſe, and endeavour to rectify their *Notions*, as well as reform their *Lives*; and, to this Purpoſe, that he ſhould poſſeſs their Minds with proper *Ideas* of the divine Nature and Perfections; of his infinite Wiſdom and Power, in the Works of *Creation* and *Providence*; of his ſupreme *Rule*, and Dominion over all Things; of his more immediate *Care*, and Superintendency over human Affairs; of his *Kindneſs*, and Benignity in all his Diſpenſations; of the *right* and *acceptable* Manner, wherein he is to be *worſhiped*; of the great *Sin*, as well as *Abſurdity* of *Profaneneſs* and Idolatry; and, withal, (*h*) that he ſhould give them a *perfect Rule* of Life, and that built upon his own Authority, for a general *Reformation* of Manners; *Promiſes* of Pardon for their paſt Offences; *Hopes* of Aſſiſtance to enable them to do better; *Aſſurance* of Acceptance of their honeſt, though imperfect Endeavours; and a full *Diſcovery* of a future State, where they are to be rewarded or puniſhed *hereafter*, according to their Behaviour *here.*

And that ſuch was the Jewiſh.

These are the *Articles*, that (to anſwer the Wants of Mankind) might be expected in a divine *Revelation:* And, accordingly, if we look into the Scriptures of the *Old Teſtament* (for what particular *Inſtructions* were given to *Adam* after his *Fall*, which might be retained in the Family of *Seth*; what *Precepts* to the Sons of *Noah* after the *Flood*, which might be preſerved by ſome of their *Poſterity*; or what *Directions* to *Abraham* upon his *Call* from Idolatry,

* Whoever looks into Hiſtory, either *ancient* or *modern*, will find, that, by the Inſtigation of the Devil, not only the *barbarous*, but even the moſt *civilized* Nations were induced, inſtead of one God, the great Creator of the Univerſe, to worſhip an *innumerable* Company of various Kinds, and different Orders, celeſtial and terreſtrial, aerial and infernal, national and domeſtick, good and bad, male and female Deities: that, of theſe Deities, ſome were guilty of the moſt horrid and prodigious Villanies and Enormities, Revenge and Murther, Inceſt and Luxury, Drunkenneſs and Intemperance, Theft, and unnatural Rebellion againſt Parents, of which their own Writings are full almoſt in every Page. Nay, that, of theſe Deities, ſome were brute Beaſts, ſuch as Dogs, Cats, Apes, Crocodiles, &c. ſome Things without Life, ſome without Being, and ſome ſo very obſcene and filthy, as not to be named without a *Bluſh:* That, in their Worſhip of theſe, they uſed ſuch *Rites*, and Ceremonies, as were agreeable to the Characters of a drunken *Bacchus*, a lewd *Flora*, a laſcivious *Venus*, a thieviſh *Mercury*, or an adulterous *Jupiter*, &c. and that, in Imitation of ſuch Gods as theſe, the People ſunk into the very Dregs of Corruption and Debauchery, and (as the Apoſtle expreſſes it) *being paſt feeling, gave themſelves over to Laſciviouſneſs, to work all Uncleanneſs with Greedineſs*, Eph. iv. 19. *Burnet's* Ser. at *Boyle's* Lect. and *Cave's* prim. Chriſt. Ch. I.

(*e*) Eph. iv. 18. (*f*) 2 Tim. ii. 26. (*g*) *Jenkins's Reaſonableneſs* of Chriſtianity. (*h*) *Burnet's* Ser. at *Boyle's* Lect.

Idolatry, which might be continued in the ſeveral *Tribes*, that deſcended from him; the *ſacred* Hiſtory was not deſigned to inform us) if we look into the *Old Teſtament*, I ſay, we ſhall there find, that God gave the *Jews* (to whom that Revelation was *primarily* made) ſufficient Notices of his moſt excellent *Nature*, in the many *Deſcriptions* of his ſacred Attributes, and of his tremendous *Majeſty*, in being the *Creator*, *Preſerver*, and ſupreme *Governor* of all Things, the *Judge* of all Mankind, and the juſt *Rewarder* of every one, according to his Works; that he inſtructed them in the right *Method* of worſhiping him, and, with what Diſpoſitions of Mind, they were to approach his Altars; that he ſtrictly cautioned them againſt all Manner of *Idolatry*, and, in ſeveral Paſſages of the *Prophets*, more eſpecially, juſtly expoſed the groſs *Stupidity*, as well as *Impiety* of it: That, in the *Decalogue*, or ten Commandments, delivered on Mount *Sinai*, he drew up a compleat *Directory* for the Conduct of their Lives, and, in his frequent Expoſtulations with them, called them to Repentance and Amendment, with Aſſurances of his Readineſs to *forgive all Iniquity, Tranſgreſſion, and Sin*, with *Promiſes*, that, if they would *turn*, he would (*i*) *put his Spirit within them, to cauſe them to walk in his Statutes, and obſerve his Judgments*; with ſolemn *Declarations*, that, (*k*) *in the Day, when he maketh up his Jewels, the Righteous* ſhould (*l*) *ſhine, as the Brightneſs of the Firmament*, but (*m*) *the Wicked ſhould be turned into Hell, and all the People, that forget God.*

A gradual Increaſe *of God's Revelations reaſonable.*

THUS, in *ancient* Times, (*n*) *God ſhewed his Word unto Jacob, his Statutes, and Ordinances unto Iſrael, but he did not deal ſo with other Nations, neither had the Heathens Knowledge of his Laws.* The *Jewiſh* Diſpenſation however was not to laſt for ever: As it advanced in Years, we find God declaring his Deſign of extending the *Limits* of his Church, ſo that, (*o*) *from the riſing of the Sun, even to the going down of the ſame, his Name ſhould be great among the Gentiles*, by the Introduction of (*p*) *a new and better Covenant, eſtabliſhed upon better Promiſes.* Why God made any Revelation at all, this proceeded from a mere Motive of his free *Grace*; and, in his divine Attributes we can perceive nothing, that ſhould reſtrain him from making it *at ſundry Times, in divers Manners*, and in different *Degrees* of Perfection, as himſelf ſhould think fit. (*q*) In the Creation of the World, we find him proceeding in this *Method*——firſt forming the *Plants* and *Vegetables*, before he produced any living Creatures, and, laſt of all, making Man, his moſt complete Piece of Workmanſhip here below: and, in like Manner, we can ſee no Reaſon, why he might not obſerve the ſame *Gradation* in his *Diſpenſations*, and, as he ſaw the World able to bear it, give Laws of greater *Purity*, and make *plainer* Manifeſtations of ſome (*r*) *Myſteries, which had been hid from Ages, and from Generations.*

The Imperfection of the Jewiſh,

(*s*) MOSES *indeed was faithful in his Houſe, as a Servant, for a Teſtimony of thoſe Things, which were to be ſpoken afterwards*; but (*t*) *when the only begotten Son, who was in the Boſom of the Father*, came down upon Earth to declare his Will, Men might reaſonably expect, not only, that ſuch a Declaration ſhould be *authentick*, and perfect, but that ſuch a *Meſſenger*, ſent from Heaven, ſhould bring freſh *Intelligence*, and make *fuller* Diſcoveries of the *inviſible Things of God*, and the Conſtitution of his *celeſtial* Kingdom, than ever the World was acquainted with before. The *Exiſtence* of God, and his *providential* Government; the *Creation* of the World, and its Deſtruction by the *Flood*; the *Fall* of Man, his *Loſs* of *Paradiſe*, and his *Reſtoration* by a *Meſſiah* to come; the miraculous *Birth*, great *Atchievements*, and divine *Character* of that *Meſſiah*, his *vicarious* Death, *powerful* Reſurrection, and *triumphant* Aſcenſion, together with a future State of Man's Happineſs or Miſery, as their Fate ſhall be determined in the general Judgment: Theſe were ſome of the *doctrinal* Points, made known to the *Jews*, and recommended as proper *Objects* of their Faith; but then, the Revelation itſelf was ſo *dark* and obſcure, that it ſeemed to have a *Vail* caſt over its Face, on Purpoſe, that every vulgar Reader might

d not

(*i*) Ezek. xxxvi. 27. (*k*) Mal. iii. 17. (*l*) Dan. xii. 3. (*m*) Pſal. ix. 17.
(*n*) Pſal. cxlvii. 19. (*o*) Mal. i. 11. (*p*) Heb. viii. 6. (*q*) *Edwards*'s Survey of Religion Vol. I.
(*r*) Col. i. 26. (*s*) Heb. iii. 5. (*t*) Bp. *Smalridge*'s Ser.

not understand it: But now these are Matters familiar, and obvious to every Understanding, that (*u*) *has the Light of the Glory of God, in the Face of Jesus Christ*; besides those many other important Truths, which his Religion is known to teach us.

The Perfection and Articles of the Christian,

THAT the *supreme* self-existent *Cause*, and Father of all Things, did, from all Eternity, by his almighty Power and Will, beget a *divine Person*, called the Son of God, (*x*) *the Brightness of his Father's Glory, and the express Image of his Person*; and that, in this Person, both the *divine* and *human* Nature do perfectly *subsist*, and are intimately *united*: (*y*) That, in the divine Nature, there is likewise a *third* Person, called *the Holy Ghost*, the Author of our spiritual Life and Sanctification, in an ineffable Manner, *proceeding from the Father and the Son*, and, *together with the Father and the Son*, partaking of the same divine Honours, so that, in one and the same Godhead, there are *three* Persons, and these three Persons are but *one* God: That this God, *in the Fulness of Time*, sent, into this lower World, *his only begotten Son*, to take our human Nature upon him, that *therein* he might make a full *Revelation* of the divine Will, give himself a *Sacrifice* and Expiation for Sin, make *Reconciliation* between God and Man, declare the *Acceptableness* of Repentance, and the *Certainty* of Pardon, and become the publick *Dispenser* of God's blessed Spirit, to assist us in the Discharge of our Duty: That this Son, when he came into the World, to avoid the *Pollution* of our Nature, was *incarnate* in a miraculous Manner, *by the Holy Ghost*, born of a *pure Virgin*, lived in obscure Life, suffered inhumane Treatment, and, at last, having preached his *Gospel*, and wrought a Multitude of *Miracles* in Confirmation of it, underwent the painful and ignominious Death of *Crucifixion*: That, notwithstanding all this, in the Space of *three* Days, he was *raised again* from the Dead, continued upon Earth for some Time, conversed with his *Apostles*, and gave them Instructions concerning the *Establishment* of his Church; was, at last, in a full Assembly of his *Disciples*, *taken up into Heaven*, and is now sitting *at the right Hand of God*, and *making Intercession for us*: That, by this Person, (*z*) *whom he hath ordained, and whereof he hath given us Assurance, in that he hath raised him from the Dead, God has appointed a Day, wherein he will judge the World in Righteousness*; that, in Order to this general *Judgment*, not only the *Soul* shall survive the *Dissolution* of the Body, but the Body itself also shall be raised again, reunited to its proper Soul, and so, in Conjunction (according to the Sentence, that the great Judge shall then pronounce) if they have done well, shall go into *everlasting Happiness*, but if they have done evil, into *everlasting Punishment*: And, lastly, that, after the final Judgment is concluded, and the Righteous are taken up into their proper *Mansions*, and there safely lodged, (*a*) *the Heavens shall pass away with a great Noise, and the Elements melt with fervent Heat, the Earth also, and the Works that are therein*, viz. all the stately *Buildings*, and fine *Furniture*, noble *Cities*, and royal *Palaces*, which are now the Pride and Admiration of the World, shall be *burnt*, and overwhelmed in the general *Conflagration*.

Which were strenuously maintained, and asserted.

THESE are some of the fundamental *Principles* of our most holy Religion, (*b*) *wherein God has made known unto us the Mystery of his Will, according to his good Pleasure, which he hath purposed in himself, that, in the Dispensation of the Fulness of Times, he might gather together in one all Things in Christ*: These the *Doctrines*, (*c*) which our Saviour has given all his Followers the greatest Encouragement to confess; which St. *Jude* calls upon every private Christian (*d*) *to contend earnestly for*, watching against all *heretical* Innovations, and, with their utmost Might, (*e*) *opposing, and convincing Gainsayers*: These the *Tenets*, which, in the pure Ages of Christianity, it was a Shame to renounce, and a Glory to adhere to; (*f*) which made the goodly Company of *Confessors*, rather than deliver up the Books, wherein they were contained, submit to any Kind of Torture, and which the noble Army of *Martyrs*, amidst all the Threats and Persecutions of their Enemies, most tri-

(*u*) 2 Cor. iv. 6. (*x*) Heb. i. 3. (*y*) *Clarke*'s Ser. at *Boyle*'s Lect. (*z*) Acts xvii. 31.
(*a*) 2 Pet. iii. 10. (*b*) Eph. i. 9, 10. (*c*) Matt. x. 32. (*d*) Jude Ver. 3.
(*e*) Tit. i. 9. (*f*) *Cave*'s primitive Christianity.

triumphantly did maintain: Theſe the *Articles*, which, in all Probability, the firſt *Preachers* of the Goſpel, from their own Knowledge, and their Maſter's Inſtitution, collected; and, having digeſted them into a ſhort *Summary*, left them with the People, whom they had gained over to the Chriſtian Profeſſion, as (*g*) *a Form of ſound Words*, both for the Confirmation of their own Faith, and the Inſtruction of others, whom they, in like Manner, ſhould convert; for ſuch is the Meaning of St. *Paul*'s Words to *Timothy*, (*h*) *the Things, that thou haſt heard of me among many Witneſſes*, viz. *the Form of ſound Words*, I took Notice of before, *the ſame commit thou to faithful Men, who ſhall be able to teach others alſo.*

Summaries *of them formed very probably by the Apoſtles.*

THE *original* World, (*i*) which, in our *Tranſlation*, is rendered a *Form*, is a *Metaphor* taken from *Painters*, who, at firſt, draw a *Sketch*, or Outlines of the Picture, they deſign, that, when afterwards they come to lay the *Colours*, by the Obſervation of theſe *Lines*, they may keep a due *Proportion*; and therefore *the Form of ſound Words*, which St. *Paul* here ſpeaks of, muſt be ſome ſhort *Summary* of the principal Articles of the Chriſtian Religion, *methodically* digeſted; and this he elſewhere calls (*k*) *the Form of Doctrine, that was delivered*; (*l*) *the firſt Principles of the Oracles of God*; (*m*) *the Principles of the Doctrine of Chriſt*; (*n*) *the Analogy of Faith*; (*o*) *the Faith, that was once delivered to the Saints*; (*p*) *the faithful Word*, which *Biſhops* were to obſerve in their Preaching; and (*q*) *the Myſtery of Faith* which *Deacons* were to *hold in a good Conſcience:* Theſe Paſſages ſhew, that, even in the *firſt* Age of Chriſtianity, the Apoſtles committed to ſuch Perſons, as they appointed to any *ſacred* Office in the Church, certain ſhort *Syſtems* of Belief, which they were to deliver in Charge to their ſeveral *Succeſſors*; and that this Practice continued in Uſe, even after the *apoſtolick* Age, we have the Teſtimony of (*r*) *Iræneus*, a Diſciple of *Polycarp*, who was a Diſciple of St. *John*, aſſuring us, "that the Church, however diſperſed "through the whole World, having re-"ceived from the Apoſtles, and their "Diſciples, the Faith in one God Almighty, the Maker of all Things, in one "Jeſus Chriſt, the Son of God, and in "the Holy Ghoſt, who preached by the "Prophets, &c. Theſe Things ſhe *pre-"ſerves, ſays he*, as if ſhe dwelt within "the Walls of one Houſe; theſe Things "ſhe *believes*, as if ſhe had but one "Heart and Soul; and theſe Things ſhe "*preaches*, and teaches, and delivers down "to all ſucceeding Generations, as if ſhe "had but one Mouth:" As indeed it will be difficult to conceive, how ſo exact an Agreement, as to the prime Articles of our Belief, could ever have happened in all the Churches, both in the *Eaſt* and *Weſt*, had there not been, from the firſt Beginning, certain *Summaries* of Faith in Uſe among all Chriſtians, though not penned all in the ſame *numerical* Words, yet in Method, and Subſtance, in a great Meaſure, the ſame.

And for what Purpoſes.

Now the true Reaſon, why theſe *holy Men of old* were ſo very careful to leave behind them ſuch *Formularies* of Chriſtian Doctrine, ſeems to be a Deſire, that their Succeſſors ſhould not want an infallible *Rule*, and Standard in their Preaching, and therefore we find St. *Paul* giving this Charge to his Son *Timothy*, (*s*) *keep that, which is committed to thy Truſt*, i. e. obſerve it in thy Preaching. When thou deliver-eſt the great Truths of the Goſpel, ſee that thou deliver them in *Terms* conformable to that *Summary*, *which thou haſt received from me*, (*t*) *that thou mayeſt approve thyſelf a Workman, that needeth not to be aſhamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth, and* (*u*) *avoiding profane and vain Bablings, and Oppoſition of Science falſely ſo called, which ſome profeſſing, have erred concerning the Faith:* And for which Reaſon it was a wiſe Inſtitution in the *primitive* Church (as we find it in all *regular* Churches ever ſince) that, whoever were ordained to any ſacred Office, ſhould, not only *anſwer* to certain *Interrogatories*, or Queſtions of *Doctrine* put to them, but be obliged likewiſe to *ſubſcribe* to *a Body of Articles*, or Confeſſion of Faith, at the Time of their *Ordination*. NOR

(*g*) 2 Tim. i. 13. (*h*) 2 Tim. ii. 2. (*i*) *Wheatley*'s Ser. at L. *Moyer*'s Lect.
(*k*) Rom. vi. 17. (*l*) Heb. v. 12. (*m*) Heb. vi. 1. (*n*) Rom. xii. 6. (*o*) Jude 3.
(*p*) Tit. i. 9. (*q*) 1 Tim. iii. 9. (*r*) L. 1. C. 9. (*s*) 1 Tim. vi. 20.
(*t*) 2 Tim. ii. 15. (*u*) 2 Tim. vi. 20.

NOR was it only for the Direction of the *Clergy*, but for the Inſtruction likewiſe of thoſe, who were *Candidates* for Baptiſm, that theſe *Compendiums* of Chriſtian Doctrine were compiled: For, though *Infants*, no Doubt, in the *Chriſtian* Church, were, all along, as capable of *Baptiſm*, as thoſe in the *Jewiſh* Church were of Circumciſion; yet, as the firſt Converſions were chiefly made among *adult* Perſons, whether *Jews* or *Gentiles*, it was fit, that they ſhould be firſt *initiated* into the chief Articles of the Chriſtian *Faith*, before they were admitted into the Chriſtian *Communion*. (*x*) To this Purpoſe there were proper Teachers ſet over them, called *Catechiſts*, whoſe Buſineſs it was, to inſtruct them in the Senſe of each *Article*, in Order to qualify them to make Profeſſion of their Faith in their own *Perſons*, becauſe without ſuch a *perſonal* Profeſſion, there was, *ordinarily*, no Admiſſion to the Privilege of Baptiſm. (*y*) But, when they were thus qualified, and came to be admitted, after a ſolemn *Renunciation* of the Devil, and devoting themſelves to the Service of Chriſt, they made an *open* Declaration of their Faith from ſome ſuch *Summary*, as had been put into their Hands; and, being *queſtioned* by the Miniſter upon each Article, gave an Account of their *Proficiency* in Chriſtian Knowledge; and from hence it is, that we find Baptiſm ſtiled by St. *Peter*, (*z*) *the Anſwer*, or Stipulation *of a good Conſcience towards God*, and St. *Paul* reminding *Timothy* (*a*) *of the good Profeſſion, which he profeſſed before many Witneſſes*, i. e. at his Baptiſm, before a full Congregation of *Saints*.

Of what Extent they were at firſt.

WHAT the *Extent* of theſe Summaries was, it is no eaſy Matter to determine; (*b*) as they were deſigned for *Hints* and Minutes only of the main *Credenda*, to be recited by the *Catechumens*, before their Baptiſm, there is Reaſon to preſume, that they were not very *prolix*; but then, (*c*) ſince every *Proſelyte* was to confeſs the Truth of ſuch *fundamental* Articles of the Church, he had turned to, as were directly oppoſite to the *principal* Errors of the *Sect*, which he had left; and ſince, before his Reception of the *Sacraments*, he was to teſtify his Aſſent to thoſe *Heads* of Chriſtian Doctrine, in which he had been *catechized*, it ſeems reaſonable to think, that the *baptiſmal* Confeſſions of thoſe Times were of a *greater Length*, than ſome are willing to admit. (*d*) *Epiſcopius*, and his Followers endeavour to perſuade the World, that, for the three firſt Ages, the Doctrine of our Saviour's *Divinity* was no *neceſſary* Article of the Chriſtian Faith; but the learned Bp. *Bull*, and Dr. *Grabe*, have judiciouſly refuted theſe Pretences; the one, by *ſhewing*, from all the *ancient Creeds*, that this Doctrine was conſtantly inſerted, before the *Nicene* Council; and the other, by *evincing* from *Scripture*, that the *Lineaments* of the Apoſtles Creed, uſed in the ordinary Adminiſtration of Baptiſm, were, at firſt, much larger, than what *Epiſcopius* pretends, and that, in the Apoſtles Age, either by their Authority, or, at leaſt, by their Approbation, the Creed was made up of all the preſent Articles, except only theſe two, the *Deſcent into Hell*, and *the Communion of Saints*, which are acknowledged to be of later Admiſſion.

Why augmented.

THE *Ethiopian Eunuch* indeed, upon declaring his Belief, (*e*) *that Jeſus Chriſt was the Son of God*, was baptized by *Philip*; *but does it therefore follow, that Men ſhould anſwer no more than* this (ſays (*f*) St. *Auſtin*) *and yet immediately be baptized? Muſt they ſay Nothing of the Holy Church? Nothing of the Remiſſion of Sins? Nothing of the Reſurrection of the Dead? And even of Chriſt himſelf, muſt they ſay nothing, but barely he was the Son of God? Nothing of his Incarnation of a Virgin, his Paſſion, his Crucifixion, his Burial, his Reſurrection on the third Day, his Aſcenſion, and Seſſion at the right Hand of the Father?* Theſe, very probably, were the *Heads* of the Chriſtian Profeſſion in St. *Auſtin*'s Days; for, before his Days, the *overſpreading* of *Hereſies* made it requiſite to enlarge the Compaſs of Creeds, and (*g*) either to inſert *new* Articles, or more fully to explain the *old* ones, as the Oppoſition to ſome particular Doctrines grew fierce, and rendered it neceſſary for the Church

(*x*) *Cave's* prim. Chriſtianity. (*y*) *Bingham*'s Antiq. Vol. I. (*z*) 1 Pet. iii. 21.
(*a*) 1 Tim. vi. 12. (*b*) *Waterland*'s Ser. at L. *Moyer*'s Lect. (*c*) *Grabe*'s Notes on *Bull*'s Judg. of the Cath. Church. (*d*) Inſtit. L. 4. Sec. 2. C. 34. (*e*) Acts viii. 37. (*f*) De Fide & Oper.
(*g*) *Waterland* ibid.

Church to inſiſt upon a *more explicit* Belief, and Profeſſion of them.

Why ſo lately *admitted into the publick Liturgy of Churches.*

THERE is one Thing peculiar in the Conduct of the ancient Church, with Relation to *Proſelytes*, when they became *Candidates* for Baptiſm, which was not in Uſe among the Apoſtles, and that is,—— (*b*) their *concealing* ſeveral *Myſteries* (ſuch as the Celebration of the two *Sacraments*, the Rite of *Confirmation*, the *Ordination* of Prieſts, the *Liturgy* of the Church, and the Doctrine of the *Trinity*) intirely from them, until they became conſiderable *Proficients* in Chriſtian Knowledge, and qualified for Baptiſm. St. *Paul*, in his preaching to the Church at *Miletus*, profeſſes openly, (*i*) *that he had not ſhunned to declare unto them all the Counſel of God*; and, in his Epiſtle to the *Epheſians*, (*k*) *he calls upon them for their Prayers, that an Utterance might be given unto him, that he might open his Mouth boldly, to make known the Myſtery of the Goſpel*; from whence it appears, (*l*) that the Apoſtles, in their Sermons, had no Fear or Caution upon them, leſt *Catechumens* ſhould come to the Knowledge of the Chriſtian *Rites* or Doctrines, as indeed any one, who looks into their Writings, may perceive with half an Eye, that they are all far from concealing their Sentiments about ſuch Matters, and that, whenever they ſpeak of the great Myſteries of our holy Religion, they do it without Reſervation. About the Time of *Tertullian* however (for he is the *firſt* Writer, that makes any Mention of it) it was thought expedient, in order to guard ſuch *Myſteries* from *Contempt*, to conciliate a *Reverence* to them in the Minds of Men, and to excite the *Curioſity*, and inflame the *Zeal* of new Converts to a ſpeedier Preparation of themſelves for a due Reception of them, to ſeclude all Strangers, and ſuch as were not initiated, not only from a *Participation*, but even from the leaſt *Inſpection* of them. From the ſame Reaſons it was, that, in the Writings of ſeveral Fathers, about this Time, (*m*) we meet with frequent and earneſt *Exhortations*, to preſerve and hide the *Creed* from publick Knowledge and Obſervation, that the *unworthy* and *profane* might not have this Secret of God with them, for which they alledge the Words of our bleſſed Saviour, (*n*) *give not that, which is holy, unto Dogs, neither caſt ye your Pearls before Swine, leſt they trample them under their Feet, and turn again, and rent you.* Nay, ſo very jealous were they in this Affair, that they even ſcrupled to commit it to Writing; and choſe rather to hand it down to their Poſterity by *Tradition:* for ſo St. *Jerom* informs us, *that the Symbol of our Faith and Hope, delivered by the Apoſtles, was not written in Paper and Ink, but in the fleſhly Tables of the Heart:* And ſo loth were they to make it *publick*, that, except at the Times of Baptiſm (which commonly were at *Eaſter* and *Whitſontide)* they never repeated it in their Congregations, from whence it came to paſs, that it was not introduced into the daily Service of the Church, till ſome hundred Years after our Lord's *Nativity.*

Abſtracts of them in the Writings of the Fathers,

BUT, though the *Reception* of Creeds into the publick *Liturgy* was of later Date, than might have been expected; yet ſeveral of the *ancient* Fathers have left us, in their Writings, ſuch *Summaries*, and Abſtracts of them as we may well ſuppoſe were, in their Times, *analagous* to the current *Forms* among Chriſtians. (*o*) Some indeed have imagined, that the Creed may be found in the Writings of *Ignatius*, *Clemens Romanus*, *Polycarp*, and *Juſtin Martyr*; but our learned *Pearſon* has rightly obſerved, that, however theſe Writers may *incidentally* make mention of ſome Articles of Faith, yet do they never *formally* deliver any ſuch intire *Syſtem* of it, as might be in Uſe in their Days. *Irenæus*, who lived in the third *Century*, is the firſt, (*p*) who has left us *one* upon Record, and his Words, upon this Occaſion, are ſo very remarkable, as to deſerve a particular Recital, and may ſerve in the Stead of many more *Authorities* of the like Nature. " The Church, ſays he, though " it be diſperſed over the whole World, " received from the Apoſtles, and their " Diſciples, the Belief of one God, the " Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and " Earth, and Sea, and all Things in them: " And in one Chriſt Jeſus, the Son of " God, who was incarnate for our Salva-

(*b*) *Bingham*'s Antiq. Vol. I. (*i*) Acts xx. 27. (*k*) Eph. vi. 19. (*l*) *Bingham*'s Antiq. Vol. I. (*m*) Critical Hiſt. of the Creed. (*n*) Matt. vii. 6. (*o*) *Bingham*'s Antiq. (*p*) Lib. I. Cap. II.

" tion: And in the holy Ghoſt, who " preached, by the Prophets, the Diſpen- " ſations of God, and the Advent, and " Nativity of a Virgin, and Paſſion, and " Reſurrection from the Dead, and bodily " Aſcenſion of the Fleſh of his beloved Son " Chriſt Jeſus our Lord into Heaven, and " his coming again from Heaven, in the " Glory of the Father, to recapitulate all " Things, and raiſe the Fleſh of all Man- " kind: That, according to the Will of " the inviſible Father, every Knee ſhould " bow, of Things in Heaven, and Things " in the Earth, and Things under the " Earth, to Jeſus Chriſt our Lord, and " God, and Saviour, and King; and that " every Tongue ſhould confeſs to him, and " that he may exerciſe juſt Judgment up- " on all, and ſend ſpiritual Wickedneſſes, " and the tranſgreſſing and apoſtate An- " gels, with all ungodly, unrighteous, law- " leſs, and blaſpheming Men into ever- " laſting Fire; but grant Life to all right- " eous, and holy Men, that keep his Com- " mandments, and perſevere in his Love, " ſome, from the Beginning, others, af- " ter Repentance, on whom he confers " Immortality, and inveſts them with eter- " nal Glory. This Faith, *ſays he*, was " the ſame in all the World—and, as " one and the ſame Sun enlighteneth all " the Kingdoms of the Earth, ſo the " preaching of this Truth ſhined over all, " and enlightened all Men, that were " willing to come to the Knowledge of " it. More than this the moſt eloquent " Ruler of the Church did not ſay, nor " did the weakeſt diminiſh any Thing of " this Tradition: For the Faith being one " and the ſame, he, that ſaid moſt of it, " could not enlarge it, nor he, that ſaid " the leaſt, take any Thing from it."

And publick Forms for the Uſe of Churches.

THE like *Specimens* may be ſeen in the Writings of *Origen*, *Cyprian*, *Tertullian*, the Author of the *apoſtolick Conſtitutions*, and ſome others, which the learned and laborious *Compiler* of the ſeveral *Antiquities of the Chriſtian Church* (to whom we refer the Reader) takes Care to produce: Nor has he forgot to make Mention of ſeveral other more perfect *Forms*, adapted to every one's perſonal Confeſſion of his Faith, which, when Creeds came to take Place in the *publick* Service, were appropriated to their reſpective Churches. The *evangelical* Prophet had foretold, that *out (p) of Sion ſhould go forth the Law, and the Word of the Lord from Jeruſalem*; and therefore, as, in that City, the great *Myſteries* of our Salvation were tranſacted, there the Apoſtles, for ſome Years, reſided, and thence the *glad Tidings* of the Goſpel did at firſt proceed, it is no improbable Conjecture, that this was the Place, in which the firſt exact *Formulary* of Faith was compiled by *apoſtolick Men*, as St. *Cyprian* calls them, and the Method and Manner of its Expreſſion is this. " I believe in one God, " the Father Almighty, Maker of Hea- " ven and Earth, and of all Things, vi- " ſible and inviſible. And in one Lord " Jeſus Chriſt, the only begotten Son " of God, begotten of the Father before " all Ages, the true God, by whom all " Things were made, who was incarnate, " and made Man, who was crucified, and " buried, and the third Day he roſe again " from the dead, and aſcended into Hea- " ven, and ſitteth on the right Hand of " the Father, and ſhall come to judge the " quick and the dead, of whoſe Kingdom " there ſhall be no End. And in the holy " Ghoſt, the Comforter, who ſpake by " the Prophets. In one Baptiſm of Re- " pentance; in the Remiſſion of Sins; " in one Catholick Church; in the Re- " ſurrection of the Fleſh, and in Life " everlaſting." The like Exemplars of ſeveral *publick* Creeds, (ſuch as that of *Cæſarea* in *Paleſtine*, of *Alexandria*, *Antioch*, *Rome*, *Aquileia*, &c.) the great *Uſher*, in his Treatiſe upon the Subject, and, from him, the abovementioned *Compiler of Church Antiquities* have exhibited, by comparing of which, one may eaſily perceive, that, though there be ſome little Variation among them in Point of *Expreſſion*, which might be occaſioned by the Liberty which every Church had to cloath the Senſe of the Creed, which the Apoſtles might leave with them, in their own *Phraſe* and Diction; yet, as to the *Matter*, and main Subſtance of them, they were very much alike: " For *(q)* whatever *metaphyſical* Speculati- " ons (ſays a good Authority in this Caſe) " the greateſt Part of Writers, before " the Council of *Nice*, indulged in their " *controverſial* Tracts, they never ſuffered " theſe Speculations to become Part of " their Religion, as appears from the *Uni-* " *formity* of all the Creeds, both *Greek* " and

(p) Iſa. ii. 3. *(q)* *Clarke*'s Scrip. Doct. in the Introduction.

" and *Latin*, in all the Chriſtian Churches " of the World, for the three firſt Cen- " turies."

The Excellency of the Apoſtles *Creed.*

IN the ſeveral Places, where theſe ſeveral Forms were received, the *Deference* paid to them was doubtleſs very great; but of all the *Syſtems*, that were then extant in the Church, none met with ſo general an Eſteem and Veneration, as did the *Roman*, which we commonly call *the Apoſtles Creed*. The *Commendations*, which the ancient Fathers give of it, one would think, were *extravagant*: (*r*) The *Comments*, and Expoſitions, that have been made of it, are, in a Manner, *innumerable*. The preſſing *Exhortations*, which Miniſters give to their Congregations to be daily converſant in it, the diligent *Care*, which they themſelves take to make it the conſtant *Model* of their preaching, together with its early *Introduction* (in Compariſon of other Forms) into the publick *Liturgy* of the Churches, where it was received, are very *remarkable*. Great is the Character, which St. *Auſtin* gives us of it, when he ſtiles it, (*s*) *The Illumination of the Soul, and the Perfection of Believers; by which the Bond of Infidelity is diſſolved, the Gate of Life opened, and the Glory of our Chriſtian Profeſſion ſhewn: little in Words indeed, but great in Myſteries: For, whatever is prefigured in the Patriarchs, declared in the Scriptures, or foretold in the Prophets concerning the everlaſting Trinity, and the Myſtery of our Saviour's Incarnation, Death, and Crucifixion, is all contained in it.* In a Word, he tells us, that this Creed is *ſhort*, *plain*, and *full*; *ſhort*, not to oppreſs the Memory of its Hearers; *plain*, not to exceed their Capacities; and *full*, to adminiſter to their Edification; whereas had it wanted any of theſe *Qualities*; had it been *plain* enough to be underſtood, but too *long* to be born in Memory; or *ſhort* enough to be remembered, but too *obſcure* and difficult for common Apprehenſions; or *plain* and *ſhort* enough, but *defective* in ſome Points of principal Doctrine, it had not anſwered the Purpoſes of the Church of Chriſt.

The Opinion *of our Church concerning it.*

WHAT Conception the Church of *England* entertains of this Syſtem, is manifeſt from the Form of her Catechiſm, and other Offices: For, (*t*) beſides that ſhe requires no other *Faith*, than this, of thoſe, whom ſhe admits to *Baptiſm*, which ſhe every where allows to be a *State of Salvation*; and, beſides that ſhe propoſes no other *Form*, than this, to thoſe, whom ſhe takes upon her to *inſtruct*, and ſo qualify both for *Confirmation*, and a more intimate *Communion* with her; by the Anſwer, which ſhe puts in the Catechumen's Mouth, viz. *that his Sureties, in his Baptiſm, did promiſe for him, that he ſhould believe all the Articles of the Chriſtian Faith*, when, by her own Form of her *Baptiſm* it is evident, that ſhe exacted no other *Profeſſion*, than that of *his believing all the Articles of the Creed*, we are now ſpeaking of; by this, I ſay, it is evident, that her Sentiment and Declaration is, that this very Creed contains in it the *whole* of the Chriſtian Faith, or, at leaſt, what is generally neceſſary to be believed by Chriſtians. Nor does her making uſe of (*u*) two other Creeds invalidate this Inference: For, as it is not the *Words*, but the *Senſe* of the Creed, that is properly its *Doctrine*, and the Object of our Belief, upon a due Peruſal of the following Explication of it, I hope it will appear, that in this is *virtually* contained, whatever in the other is expreſſed more copiouſly. They indeed were deſigned for the Suppreſſion of ſome *Hereſies*, that were then ſprung up: The *one* is an Enlargement on the *divine Filiation* of our bleſſed Lord, in Bar to the *Arian* Scheme, and on the *Nature* and *Offices* of the bleſſed Spirit, in Oppoſition to the *Macedonians*; and the other an Illuſtration (as far as Words can go) of the great and awful *Myſtery of the Trinity*, in Confutation of the *Apollinarians*; and ſince all theſe *Hereſies* are now entertained and foſtered amongſt us, (*x*) our Church thought it proper to receive into her *Liturgy* theſe approved *Antidotes* againſt them, that ſo, by a frequent *Repetition* of them, ſhe might be guarded againſt the *Evaſions*, and *Miſrepreſentations* of all *Hereticks*, of whatever Denomination they be, who would pervert the Doctrine of *a Trinity in Unity*, arraign the *Co-eternity* of the Son, or deny the *Co-equality* of the Holy Ghoſt; but it is the *Apoſtolick* Creed, that, in her *Morning* and *Evening* Prayer, ſhe makes the moſt conſtant Uſe of, becauſe ſhe accounts it (with

(*r*) *Heylyn* on the Apoſt. Creed. (*s*) De Temp. Ser. 115. (*t*) *Towerſon's* Introduct. to the Apoſt. Creed. (*u*) The Nicene and Athanaſian. (*x*) *Wheatly* on the Creeds.

(with St. *Auſtin*) ſo *ſhort*, as not to be forgotten; ſo *plain*, as not to be miſtaken; and ſo *full* withal, as not to be *deficient* in any eſſential Point of Doctrine.

Its various Appellations, *and why called* Symbolum.

FOR this Reaſon, among many others, it was honoured and dignified with ſo many *Titles*, and Appellations. For ſometimes (*y*) it is called *the Rule of Faith*, becauſe it was the known *Standard*, by which *Orthodoxy and Hereſy* were examined, and diſtinguiſhed; ſometimes, *the Rule of Truth*, becauſe it was the *Model*, by which every Preacher was to *frame* his Doctrine; ſometimes, *the Scripture*, as being collected from the inſpired Writings of the *new Teſtament*; and ſometimes *the Leſſon*, from the Obligation, which *Converts* to Chriſtianity were under to *learn* it, before they were admitted to Baptiſm; but its moſt uſual and remarkable Title, is, that of *Symbol*; though, why it was ſo called, there is no good Agreement among the learned. Some are of Opinion, that it received that Name, in Alluſion to the Cuſtom of ſeveral Perſons meeting together at one common *Meal*, where every one contributes his *Share* towards it, and all the Shares, gathered up, and thrown into one Maſs, make up the *Entertainment*, even as the Apoſtles, *ſay they*, met together, and, having *collected* what lay diffuſed in the large Volumes of the Scripture, that they reduced into this ſhort *Compendium*: Others had rather derive it from *military* Affairs; and therefore ſuppoſe, that, as the Oath of *Fidelity*, which Soldiers were wont to take to the *Emperor*, when they entered into his Service, was called *Symbolum*; ſo is the Creed a *Token* of the *Contract*, which we make with God at our *Baptiſm*; though others would rather have it, that, as in *civil* Wars, where the Arms, Language, and Manner of Fighting, in both Armies, are the ſame, it was uſual for the *General* to give his Soldiers a particular *Symbol*, i. e. a *Sign*, or *Watch-word*, whereby they might diſtinguiſh Foes from Friends, *ſo the Myſtery of the Creed was deſigned by the Apoſtles* (as (*z*) an ancient *Commentator* words it) *to be a Mark of Diſtinction between Believers and Unbelievers, to diſcover both Strangers and Enemies to the Faith of the Church, thoſe, that knew it not, and thoſe, that had corrupted it.*

THE learned Author of *the Critical Hiſtory of the Apoſtles Creed* (a Work, that I ſhall, all along, carry in my Eye) thinks it more natural to fetch it from the *Sacra*, or religious Rites of the *Heathens*, "where "thoſe, that are *initiated* in their *Myſte*-"*ries*, and admitted to the Knowledge of "their peculiar *Services*, (which were hid-"den, and concealed from the greateſt "Part of the *idolatrous* Multitude,) had "certain *Signs* or *Marks*, called *Sym*-"*bola*, given them, by which they mu-"tually knew each other, and, upon the "Delivery of them, were, without any "Scruple, admitted, in their Temple, to "the ſecret Worſhip and *Rites* of that "God, whoſe *Symbols* they had received." (*a*) But it is not very probable, that *Chriſtians*, in the pureſt Ages of the Church, would have ſuch Regard to the filthy and abominable Myſteries of the *Heathens*, as to take the Signification of the *Name*, which they gave to their *Creed*, their *venerable* Creed, from ſo vile an Original: Nay, (*b*) whoever conſiders the ſtrict Piety of thoſe Times, and the horrid Impiety of theſe *Symbols*, and Services, will think it more likely for them, to have embraced *Martyrdom*, rather than profaned their moſt holy Religion with ſuch a ſcandalous Imitation of the heathen *Sacra*.

The moſt probable *Opinion*,

IT is much more reaſonable therefore to ſuppoſe, with others, that this Name was given to the Creed, not with Relation to any appropriate Senſe, uſed by any Body of Men, whether *military*, or *myſtick*, but from the general Signification of the Word, *Symbolum*, (which according to *Grammarians*) means a *Badge*, or Note of Diſtinction, and, conſequently, implies no more than this—That *Chriſtians*, having learnt this *orthodox Form* of Faith, and, at their Baptiſm, ſolemnly promiſed to continue in the Profeſſion of it, whenever they changed their Abode, and travelled into foreign Parts, upon the firſt Declaration of it, were admitted into the *Communion* of the Church, unto which they came: For ſuch is the Senſe of the Apoſtle; (*c*) he, *that abideth in the Doctrine of Chriſt, hath both the Father and the Son; but, if there come any unto you, and bring not this Doctrine, receive him not into your Houſe, neither bid him God ſpeed.*

FROM

(*y*) *Bingham*'s Antiq. Vol. I. (*z*) Max. Taurinenſis Hom. in Symb. (*a*) *Bingham* ibid. (*b*) *Nicholls* on the Articles (*c*) 2 John 9, 10.

Who were the Authors of it.

FROM this very Paſſage of St. *John*, it ſeems to be manifeſt, that, in his Days, there was a certain *Formulary* of Faith, much of the ſame Import every where, preſerved in all Churches, and that every Chriſtian, of a competent *Underſtanding*, was obliged to be acquainted with it: But then, how ſuch a Thing came to be *depoſited* in each Church, and who were reputed the *Compilers* of it; eſpecially whether the Apoſtles were the *Authors* of the Creed, that goes under their Names, and whether they left it in the very ſame Method, and Form of Words, wherein it has deſcended to us; theſe are *Queſtions*, that have ſtrangely divided the learned World, and what I ſhall now take Occaſion to enquire into, by producing the main *Arguments* on both Sides, in order to come to a clearer Perception of the *Truth*, and to make ſome proper *Concluſion* from the *whole*.

Arguments for the Apoſtles from Tradition.

THOSE, who plead for the Apoſtles, as the *Authors and Finiſhers* of this Form, lay a great Streſs upon the *Tradition*, which we meet with (*d*) in *Ruffinus*, viz. *that, after the Aſcenſion of our Lord, and the Effuſion of the Holy Ghoſt, the Apoſtles, being about to depart from one another, in order to propagate the Goſpel in ſeveral Parts of the habitable World, ſettled among themſelves a Rule of their future Preaching, leſt, when they were ſeparated, they might poſſibly teach thoſe, they invited to the Chriſtian Faith, a different Doctrine. Being all of them therefore aſſembled together, and filled with the Holy Ghoſt, they compoſed a Creed (by throwing into one Form every one's Sentiment) for a Standard of what they were to preach, and a Rule of what others were to believe.* This is the *Tradition* of our Fathers, *ſay they*, and a Tradition ſo well atteſted, and ſo *univerſally* received, backed with ſuch *Authorities*, and confirmed with ſuch *ſubſtantial Reaſons*, that, if we go about to ſet it aſide, we (*e*) may as well reject the Names, and Number of the Books of *Canonical* Scripture, the Obſervation of the *Lord*'s *Day*, the Practice of *Infant Baptiſm*, and many other Rites, and Obſervances in the Church, which we hold by the ſame Tenure, and have no other *Medium* to prove them of *primitive* Uſe, than the *unanimous* Teſtimony of *Antiquity*.

The Writings of the Apoſtles.

THAT both St. *Paul*, and St. *Peter*, in their *catechetical* Diſcourſes to the People, comprized all the main *Points* of the Chriſtian Doctrine, as they occur in the Apoſtles Creed, cannot be denied. (*f*) St. *Paul*, in his Preaching to the *Athenians*, maintains the *firſt* Article, by calling God, (*g*) *the Lord of Heaven and Earth, who made the World, and all things in it:* St. *Peter*, in acquainting us with the Voice of God, which he heard, declaring our Saviour (*h*) *to be his beloved Son, in whom he was well pleaſed*, bears Witneſs to the *ſecond*: The *third* is confirmed by the Teſtimony of St. *Luke* (who from St. *Paul*'s Inſtructions is ſaid to have wrote his Goſpel) wherein he gives us an Account of our (*i*) *Lord's miraculous Conception and Nativity.* (*k*) *His Paſſion, and Death; his Burial, and Reſurrection on the third Day*, (which are the Matter of the *fourth*, and *fifth* Articles) St. *Paul* declares to the *Corinthians*, in the very ſame Order, wherein they ſtand in the Apoſtles Creed. St. *Peter*, in his Sermons (*l*) both to the *Jews* and *Gentiles*, makes mention of (*m*) *his Exaltation to the right Hand of God, to be Lord and Chriſt*, and, at the End of the World, of his *Advent to judge both the Living and the Dead*, which are the Subject of the *ſixth*, and *ſeventh*. St. *Paul*, in writing to the *Corinthians*, declares the *Exiſtence* and Operations of the *Holy Ghoſt* (which is the Argument of the *eighth* Article) when he tells them, that (*n*) *they were waſhed, and ſanctified, and juſtified in the Name of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and by the Spirit of our God.* In his Epiſtle to the *Epheſians*, he talks of (*o*) *a glorious Church, holy, and without Blemiſh, whereof Chriſt is the Head*; and intimates *the Communion of Saints*, when he tells the *Romans*, that (*p*) we *being many, are one Body in Chriſt, and every one Members one of another*, which is the Subſtance of the *ninth*. *The Remiſſion of Sins* (which is the *tenth*) is not only a Part of St. *Peter*'s (*q*) firſt Sermon at *Jeruſalem*, but of St. *Paul*'s likewiſe, (*r*) in a full Con-

f gregation

(*d*) Expoſt. Symb. (*e*) *Comber* Comp. to the Temple, and *Heylyn* on the Creed. (*f*) *Grabe*'s Notes on Bp. *Bull*'s Judicium. (*g*) Acts xvii. 24. (*h*) 2 Pet. i. 17. (*i*) Luke i. 35. (*k*) 1 Cor. xv. 3, 4. (*l*) Acts ii. 22. (*m*) Ver. 33, and 36. (*n*) 1 Cor. vi. 11. (*o*) Eph. v. 27. (*p*) Rom. xii. 5. (*q*) Acts ii. 38. (*r*) Acts xiii. 38, 39.

gation both of *Jews* and *Gentiles*, at *Antioch*; and *the Reſurrection of the Dead, and eternal Judgment* (which anſwer the Purport of the *eleventh* and *twelfth*) are put together by St. *Paul*, (*r*) in his Epiſtle to the *Hebrews*, as *the firſt Elements, and Principles of the Doctrine of Chriſt.* Now, if all the Branches of the Creed, that is under Debate, *ſay they*, were thus delivered by the Apoſtles, in their ſeveral Writings and Diſcourſes, it is no great *Stretch* of Fancy to ſuppoſe, that, at one time or other, they might take Occaſion to reduce them to a ſmall *Compendium*, eſpecially ſince we find them ſo frequently putting the Perſons, they ſpeak and write to, in Mind of *a certain Form of Doctrine, that was once delivered to them*, a *Depoſitum, committed to their Truſt*, and a *Syſtem of ſound Words*, which they required them *to hold faſt*, with ſeveral Expreſſions of the ſame Import, which the beſt Expoſitors, among the *Ancients*, did conſtantly underſtand in the Senſe we are now contending for.

The Authority of the Fathers,

(*s*) THAT all along, from the Times of the Apoſtles, there was a *Syſtem* of Faith taught *adult* Perſons, before they were admitted to Baptiſm, is a Fact univerſally acknowledged; and that *this* could be no other, than the Apoſtles Creed, we have Reaſon to believe, becauſe the *Queſtions*, propoſed to them at their Baptiſm (and which are ſtill upon Record in the Writings of the *Fathers*) are delivered in the very ſame *Words*, wherein the Creed is conceived. This however is a Matter of *Fact*, *ſay they*, proper only to be decided by *Authority*; and if ſo, we have the Teſtimony (*t*) of *Clemens Romanus, that the Apoſtles, by joint Conſent, compoſed the Creed, which the Church of the Faithful now holds*; (*u*) of *Iræneus*, that *the univerſal Church received, from the Apoſtles and their Diſciples, the Faith, which believeth in God the Father Almighty*, &c. of *Tertullian*, who calls it (*x*) *a Rule of Faith, which deſcended to us from the Beginning of the Goſpel, before any Heretick did ariſe*; of St. *Jerom*, who ſtiles it (*y*) *a Symbol of Faith and Hope, delivered by the Apoſtles*; and of *Leo Magnus*, who terms it (*z*) *a ſhort, but full Confeſſion of the Catholick Creed, which we received by the Authority of apoſtolick Inſtitution:* To ſay nothing of a Cloud of Witneſſes more among the ſober and learned of all Nations *Roman*, and *Reformed*, *Lutheran* and * *Calviniſtical*, who all aſſent to this Truth.

And the Reaſon of the Thing.

AND indeed, if we conſider the Thing impartially, *ſay they*, that the Apoſtles ſhould eſtabliſh a certain *Rule* of Preaching among themſelves, that, wherever they went, there might be no *Variation* in their Doctrine, is no more, than what might be expected from them. St. *Paul*, in his former Epiſtle to the *Corinthians*, has taken Care to inform us, how apt the *primitive* Chriſtians were to have Strife and *Diviſions* among themſelves, upon the Account of their Teachers. (*a*) *I am of Paul, I am of Apollos, and I am of Cephas*, was their common Cry; but much greater, and more vehement would their Contentions have been, had any Diverſity appeared in their Doctrine; had *Paul, who planted*, and *Apollos, who watered*, proceeded by contrary Methods; but now, ſince *he, who planted, and he, who watered, were one*, though there might be ſome *Partiality* in the *Hearers*, the *Inſtructors*, as having the ſame

* *Calvin*'s Teſtimony to this Purpoſe is ſo very particular, that I cannot but take ſome Notice of it—— "By a general Conſent of old Writers, *ſays he*, it is aſcribed to the Apoſtles, either becauſe they thought, "that, by common Conſent, it was written, and publiſhed by the Apoſtles, or that it was a *Compendium*, "ſo faithfully collected out of the Doctrine delivered by the Apoſtles, as juſtly to deſerve that Title: And "I take it for granted, that, whenceſoever it proceeded, it has, from the firſt *Beginning* of the Church, "and from the very Times of the Apoſtles, been always uſed, as a publick Confeſſion, and received by "the Conſent of all Men. It is very probable, that it was not privately written by any one Man, becauſe, "even from the fartheſt Age, it has always been retained in *ſacred* Authority, and Credit among the Godly; "but, what is chiefly to be regarded, is quite out of all Controverſy, *viz.* that the whole Hiſtory of our "Faith is briefly, and in diſtinct Order, rehearſed in it, and that it contains nothing, but what is *ſealed* with "the ſound Teſtimonies of Scripture." Inſtit. Lib. II.

(*r*) Heb. vi. 1, 2. (*s*) *Comber* ibid. (*t*) Epiſt. ad Fratrem apud Ruffinum. (*u*) Adver. Hæreſ. L. 1. C. 2. (*x*) Adver. Prax. C. 2. (*y*) Epiſt. ad Pam. (*z*) Ser. II. de Paſſione. (*a*) 1 Cor. i. 12.

ſame ſtanding Rule to go by, were perfectly *harmonious* and uniform: And, in like Manner, ſince the Apoſtles, by the Spirit of Prophecy, foreſaw, that, in a ſhort Time, *Hereticks* (*b*) *would ariſe, and bring in damnable Doctrines, even denying the Lord, that bought them*, they muſt have been negligent of the *Flock*, committed to their Charge, had they not provided them with a proper *Criterion*, whereby they might (*c*) *try the Spirits, that would go out into the World*, and, (*d*) (*if even an Angel from Heaven preached any other Goſpel, than what they had received*) whereby they might pronounce him *accurſed*.

(*e*) OTHER Creeds, *they urge*, have received frequent *Alterations* and Additions: In ſome Articles they are *defective*, and in others ſtrangely *redundant*; but the Apoſtles Creed has always continued the ſame *regular*, and *uniform* Compoſition, having in it all the *Branches* of the *longeſt*, and, nothing inſerted in it, to make its Parts *diſproportionate*. Others were modelled, according to the Exigences of the Church, becauſe they were looked upon as *human Formularies* of *eccleſtiaſtical* Conſtitution only; but in this, which, from the firſt, had the *Stamp* of divine Authority upon it, none ever durſt, in the Space of ſo many Years, make the leaſt *Variation*. Of others they can aſſign the *Framers*, and point out what Father, or what Council compoſed them; but of this no Author can be produced, except the Apoſtles, and therefore (as (*f*) St. *Auſtin* obſerves) *what the whole Church holds, and was not inſtituted by any Council, but always retained, that, we may juſtly believe, has been delivered by apoſtolick Authority*. And indeed, (*g*) who were ſo able, *ſay they*, to preſcribe a *Rule*, ſo generally to be received over all the World, and ſo ſuddenly to be obeyed by all Chriſtian People, as the Lord's Apoſtles? Who elſe, but they, were of *Authority*, ſufficient to impoſe a Form on the Church of Chriſt, to be ſo univerſally held, and taught in all Tongues, and Languages; to be *illuſtrated* by the *Notes* and *Commentaries* of the moſt glorious Lights of the Chriſtian *Firmament*, and to *continue* ſo many hundred Years together, not only without any ſuch *Oppoſition*, as other Creeds met with, but even without any ſenſible *Alteration* in any one Word, or Syllable?

Arguments on the other Side.

THESE are the principal Arguments, which thoſe, who contend for the *Genuineeſs* of the Apoſtles Creed, in the Form, which is now handed down to us, are wont to alledge. Thoſe, that eſpouſe the contrary Part, endeavour, what they can, to explode the *Tradition* itſelf, either as precarious and uncertain, or elſe intirely falſe, and fictitious. To this Purpoſe they tell us, (*h*) that it was near four hundred Years after Chriſt, before the Forming of the Creed by the Apoſtles was ever once heard of; that *Ruffinus* himſelf, who was the firſt *Reporter* of it, though in the Beginning of his *Commentary*, he roundly aſſerts it, by the Time, that he comes to the Middle, grows leſs *ſanguine*, and ſeems to intimate that the Authors of it were unknown: (*i*) That, in the Form of the Apoſtles Creed, as it now ſtands, there are *two* or *three* Articles, ſuch as *the Deſcent into Hell*, *the Communion of Saints*, and perhaps *the Life everlaſting* inſerted, which, according to *Ruffinus* himſelf, as well as (*k*) other later Teſtimonies, were not *originally* in it, nor in any other Creed of the *Eaſtern* Church for above the Space of four hundred Years: And that, in its preſent Enlargement, it could not be the Work of the twelve Apoſtles, or of a ſpeedy Commencement after our Saviour's Aſcenſion, and Miſſion of the Holy Ghoſt, is evident from hence —— that the *College* of the Apoſtles, for the moſt Part, ſtayed at *Jeruſalem*, until *Herod Antipas* began the Perſecution of the Church, and (*l*) *having killed James, and impriſoned Peter*, forced them to ſeek for Safety in other Regions; but this was not till ten Years after our Lord's Exaltation: That, at this Time, none of the *Evangeliſts* (except perhaps St. *Matthew*) had finiſhed their Goſpels, nor any of the *Apoſtles* their Epiſtles; and, conſequently, this Creed could not be compiled out of their Writings; and, to ſuppoſe that the Apoſtles made it, as a *Rule* and Direction to themſelves, (*m*) is to reflect Diſcredit upon the Chriſtian Religion, as

From the Precarioſneſs of the Tradition.

And that the Apoſtles could not be the Authors of it.

(*b*) 2 Pet. ii. 1. (*c*) 1 John iv. 1. (*d*) Gal. i. 8, 9. (*e*) *Heylyn* on the Creed. (*f*) De Bapt. in Denat. L. 4. (*g*) *Heylyn* ibid. (*h*) Hiſt. of the Apoſt. Creed. (*i*) *Bingham*'s Antiq. (*k*) Bp. *Uſher* and *Pearſon*. (*l*) Acts xii. 2, 3. (*m*) Voſſius de tribus Sym.

as if the firſt Preachers of it had not ſufficient Knowledge of its *fundamental* Doctrines, or were diffident of their Maſter's *Promiſe*, viz. that the (*n*) *Holy Spirit*, which he *would ſend to them from the Father, ſhould guide them into all Truth*, (*o*) *teach them all Things*, and *put into their Mouths*, upon all Occaſions, (*p*) *what they were to ſpeak.*

Becauſe no Mention is made of it in any Hiſtory *or* Council,

THE Formation of a Creed however, *ſay they*, by ſuch eminent *Lights* of the Church, was a Buſineſs of ſuch *Moment*, that, had it been Matter of Fact, it cannot be imagined, (*q*) how St. *Luke*, in his *Hiſtory* of the Acts, ſhould take no Notice of it; (*r*) that *Socrates*, and other *eccleſiaſtical* Writers, who treat ſo largely of *Synods*, and Councils, and ſet down ſo *punctually* their ſeveral *Confeſſions of* Faith, ſhould never once mention this great Synod of all; nay, that theſe many Councils and Synods, in their *Deciſions* and Determinations of Faith and Doctrine, ſhould not ſo much as once refer to this *apoſtolical* Syſtem, as their *Standard* and *Baſis*, if any ſuch Thing had been then extant.

Eſpecially that of Nice.

(*s*) AT the Council of *Nice*, which met to condemn the *Arian* Hereſy, there was a fair Opportunity, on both Sides given, to appeal to this *Form*, which being compoſed by Perſons, aſſiſted by the Spirit of God, was of equal *Authority* with the *Canon* of Scripture itſelf; but this we hear nothing of; and yet we cannot but think, that, had there been a *Tradition* of ſuch a Form to be appealed to, both *Parties* would have laid in their Claim to it; and the *Arians* in particular (when the *Vote* went againſt them) would have put the chief Streſs of their Cauſe upon this Point, that they adhered to the Apoſtles Creed, in Oppoſition to the Innovations of the *Nicene* Fathers. Theſe Fathers, at this Time, were debating about a proper Form to prevent the Growth, and Increaſe of *Hereſy*; but we cannot ſee, with what Face any Body of Men could ſet about the making *another*, when they had *one* already prepared to their Hands, of an Authority, far ſuperior to any *human* Compoſition; and yet, we may obſerve, that theſe venerable Men went on in their Work, and, after ſome Time of Deliberation, compoſed a Creed, (*t*) which was afterwards held in great Eſteem, and with which they performed one of the higheſt Offices of the Chriſtian Religion, I mean *Baptiſm*. (*u*) In a Word, the *Variety* of Creeds, in ſo many different Forms, uſed by the Ancients, and ſtill extant in their Writings, ſome with *Omiſſions*, others with *Additions*, and all in a different *Phraſe*, and Manner of Expreſſion, are an evident Proof, that one *univerſal* Form had never been pitched upon, and preſcribed to the Church by the Apoſtles.

The Roman *and the Apoſtles Creed the ſame, and why it is called the* Apoſtles.

THE Apoſtles Creed indeed, properly ſpeaking, is the *Roman* Creed, or the Creed made uſe of by the Church of *Rome*; and therefore it is a groſs Miſtake in thoſe, who imagine this Creed was the Work of the Apoſtles, merely becauſe it obtained, among the *Ancients*, the Name of *apoſtolick*. The Manner of the Ancients was to call almoſt all Creeds, in the principal Churches, where any Apoſtle had for any Time reſided, *apoſtolick*, as being all derived from the Apoſtles Doctrine, and, very probably, left in the Church by ſome one of them, at his Departure, or Demiſe. (*x*) Now, in the *Eaſtern* Parts, there were a Multitude of ſuch Churches, *Jeruſalem*, *Corinth*, *Epheſus*, *Antioch*, &c. but in the *Weſtern*, none, but *Rome*; ſo that, when any one, in the *Weſt*, ſpake of the *apoſtolick* Church, he was always ſuppoſed to mean that of *Rome*; in Conſequence of which, their *Biſhop* came to be called the *apoſtolick* Biſhop, their *See*, the apoſtolick See, their *Faith*, the apoſtolick Faith, and, among the reſt, the *Creed*, that they uſed, the apoſtolick Creed; but by this they never intended, that (taken all together) it was of any *older* Date, *greater* Authority, or more *ſacred* Inſtitution, than ſeveral other Creeds.

The Reſult of the Arguments on both Sides.

THESE are ſome of the common *Topicks*, which thoſe, who deny the Apoſtles to be the Authors of the Creed, that goes under their Name, do generally make uſe of: And, from what we find advanced on both Sides, we may obſerve, that, though we ſhould give up the Account of the *Tradition*, as it is related by *Ruffinus*, but more eſpecially by the Author, that

(*n*) John xvi. 13. (*o*) John xiv. 26. (*p*) Matt. x. 19. (*q*) Crit. Hiſt. of the Creed.
(*r*) Voſſius ibid. (*s*) *Burnet* on the Articles. (*t*) Hiſt. of the Creed. (*u*) *Bingham* ibid.
(*x*) *Wall*'s Hiſt. of Infant Bapt.

that goes under the Name of St. *Auſtin*, whoſe Diviſion of the *twelve* Articles among the *twelve* Apoſtles ſeems a little * too *fantaſtical*; yet the *Reference*, which is frequently made, in ſeveral Scripture-Paſſages (but more particularly in St. *Paul*'s *canonical* Epiſtles to *Timothy*) to a certain *Form of Doctrine*, then extant in the Church, and the Teſtimony of ſeveral venerable Fathers, who affirm that this Form was delivered to Chriſtians by the Authority, or at leaſt by the Approbation of the Apoſtles themſelves, are Arguments too powerful, to be eaſily wreſted out of the Hands of thoſe, that maintain them, and which their *Antagoniſts* (as far as we perceive) have never yet attempted to do in *Form*: And therefore from the whole we may conclude——that this Creed, though we find no Mention of it; either in the Hiſtory of the *Acts*, or any other ancient *Records*, becauſe it was not allowable in the *primitive* Times (as we obſerved from St. *Jerom*) to have it committed to Writing, does juſtly deſerve the Name of *apoſtolical*, and that, not only becauſe it was in uſe in the *Roman*, or apoſtolick Church; not only becauſe it contains the Sum of the Apoſtles Doctrines, and becauſe its Antiquity is ſo great, as to extend to the *apoſtolick* Times; but becauſe the Apoſtles themſelves (ſome of them at leaſt) had an Hand, or Direction in the Compoſition of it, or, (as others imagine) in every Church, they planted, left behind them ſome ſuch *Minutes* of Inſtruction, as they, in framing their reſpective Creeds, were to make the *Foundation* and Ground-work; and, though at Liberty to employ their own Expreſſions, were obliged religiouſly to adhere to. "For it is not eaſy to conceive (as "(y) one of the adverſe Part is forced to "allow) how all Churches ſhould harmo-"nize, not only in the Articles them-"ſelves, but, in a great Meaſure, in the "very Method and Order of them, had "there not been, from the very firſt Plan-"tation of Chriſtianity, *a Form of ſound* "*Words*, or a *Syſtem* of Faith, delivered "by its firſt Planters;" nor can it be ſuppoſed that all Churches would have agreed ſo unanimouſly in the Confeſſion of ſo many Articles of it, unleſs it had proceeded from ſome ſuch Authority, as they all acknowledged.

The Articles not made by the Church.

BUT, in Oppoſition to all this, (z) ſome are of Opinion, that the Apoſtles made no Creed at all, but that it was chiefly compoſed, about the *ſecond* Century, by the Governors of the Church, and from Time to Time, augmented, as the *Riſe* of Sects and Hereſies called for new Articles to be made. Thus, becauſe the *Gnoſticks* brought in the Doctrine of a *twofold* Deity, one *good*, and another *evil*, therefore the Church put into her Creed, *I believe in God*, or *in one God:* Becauſe *Menander*, the Diſciple of *Simon Magus*, aſſerted, that the World was not made by God, but by Angels, therefore ſhe added, *the Maker of Heaven and Earth:* Becauſe *Carpocrates* affirmed, that *Jeſus* was a mere Man, and begotten of both Sexes, as other Men are, therefore ſhe inſerted, that he *was conceived by the Holy Ghoſt*; and (to name no more) becauſe *Baſilides* believed that *Simon* of *Cyrene*, and not *Jeſus* of *Nazareth*, was put to Death by the *Jews*, therefore ſhe adjoin'd, that *he was crucified, dead, and buried.* But this wild Conceit is ſufficiently refuted by the *learned* (a) *Dr. Grabe*, who is clearly of Opinion, that the Apoſtles Creed was, at firſt, of a competent Length, and conſiſted indeed of all the preſent Articles, except only that of *the Communion of Saints*, which, in the *fourth* Century, might be inſerted in Oppoſition to the *Donatiſts* in *Africa*, and that of Chriſt's *Deſcent into Hell*, which was added, againſt

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* The Author, who goes under the Name of St. *Auſtin*, tells the Story thus——that all the Apoſtles, being met together to conſult about a Creed, *Peter* ſpake firſt, and ſaid, *I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and Earth*; James, *and in Jeſus Chriſt, his only Son our Lord*; Andrew, *who was conceived by the Holy Ghoſt, born of the Virgin Mary*; Philip, *ſuffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried*; Thomas, *he deſcended into Hell, the third Day he roſe again from the Dead*; Bartholomew, *he aſcended into Heaven, and ſitteth on the right Hand of God the Father Almighty*; Matthew, *from thence he ſhall come to judge the Quick and the Dead*; James, the Son of Alpheus, *I believe in the Holy Ghoſt, the Holy Catholick Church*; Simon Zelotes, *the Communion of Saints, the Forgiveneſs of Sins*; Jude, the Brother of James, *the Reſurrection of the Body*; and Mattathias, *the Life everlaſting. Amen.*

(y) The Author of the Crit. Hiſt of the Apoſt. Creed. (z) *Baſnage* Exercit. in Baron: and the Author of the Crit. Hiſt. (a) In his *Notes* upon Bp. *Bull*'s *Judicium.*

againſt (*b*) the *Valentinians*, as ſome ſay, and, as others affirm, againſt the *Apollinarians*.

And ſhould comprehend Scripture Doctrines only.

OUR Church indeed pronounces, that (*c*) *the three Creeds*, viz. the *Nicene*, the *Athanaſian*, and the *Apoſtles* Creed, *ought thoroughly to be received, and believed*; but then the Reaſon, that ſhe gives for this Injunction, is, *becauſe they may be proved by moſt certain Warrants of Holy Writ*; for, in another Article, ſhe declares, that, (*d*) *although the Church be a Witneſs and Keeper of Holy Writ, yet, as it ought not to decree any Thing againſt the ſame, ſo, beſides the ſame, ought it not to enforce any Thing to be believed for Neceſſity of Salvation.* The Truth is, we *receive* and *believe* theſe Creeds, not upon their own Authority, for Authority they have none, but what they derive from the Holy Scriptures, whereof they are *Extracts:* But then, as the Holy Scriptures have the Teſtimony of God for their *Sanction*, we therefore *believe* theſe Extracts, becauſe we are ſure, that they are there *contained*, and we *ſo* believe them; and no *otherwiſe*, than as they are there *delivered*. Upon this Foundation alone it was, that the *primitive* Church claimed a Submiſſion to her *Decrees*; and therefore, when any ancient *Council* was held, a Throne was erected, in the Midſt of the Aſſembly, on which the *Goſpels* were ſolemnly laid, that every one might perceive upon what Authority their Deciſions were to be built. And, in like Manner, our Church profeſſes a due Reſpect and Veneration to the Holy Scriptures, when, whatever Doctrines are conſonant to the Word of God, ſhe recommends to our Faith, but whatever is repugnant, or contrary thereunto, ſhe pronounces *not lawful for her to ordain*; for (as a (*e*) learned Son of her's worthily expreſſes her Sentiments) " nothing ought to be impoſed, as " *a neceſſary Article of Faith* to be believ- " ed *by all*, but what may be evidently " propounded *to all*, as a Thing, which " God requires *all* to believe: It being im- " poſſible to make any Thing appear as a " neceſſary Article of Faith, but what " may be evidently proved, not only to be " revealed by the Word of God, but to " be alſo, what God obliges all Men to " believe, in Order to Salvation."

The Church's Power however to explain and enlarge them.

ALL this however hinders not, but that the *Guardians* of our Faith are inveſted with a Power to *explain* or *enlarge* any one Article, as they find it liable to be debaſed or corrupted by the *Gloſſes*, and falſe Conſtructions of *Hereticks*. (*f*) The Fathers, at the Council of *Nice*, did not make a *new* Creed (as ſome by the Name may imagine) but only added to an *ancient* Form, in Uſe before in the Church, the Words, *begotten, not made, and being of one Subſtance with the Father*, to ſuppreſs the then growing Hereſy of the *Arians*, which was utterly ſubverſive of Chriſt's *Co-eſſentiality* with God. That Creed however, as it was penned by the Council of *Nice* ended with the Words, *I believe in the Holy Ghoſt*, without any farther Explanation of that Article, or the Addition of any Thing after it, becauſe the ſole Buſineſs of the Fathers, then aſſembled, was, to explain the important Article of the Son's Divinity, and not to draw up a compleat Syſtem of Faith: But when *Macedonius* had broached his *Hereſy*, whereby he denied the *Godhead* of the *Holy Ghoſt*, making him no more than a *miniſtring* Spirit, and differing from Angels only in Degree, the Fathers met at *Conſtantinople* (which was the *ſecond general* Council) and made ſuch Additions to the *Nicene* Creed, (by ſtiling the bleſſed Spirit, *the Lord and Giver of Life, who proceedeth from the Father, who, with the Father and the Son together, is worſhipped and glorified, and who ſpake by the Prophets,*) as implied both his Nature, and Power to be divine. From which two Inſtances (without going any farther) it is evident, (*g*) that the Deſign of the *Catholick* Church was, all along, to keep up the whole *Fabrick* of the Chriſtian Faith, according to the full Meaning of ſacred Writ, and that therefore, when any Part of it came to be attacked, they bent all their Care to ſuccour and relieve that Part, by explaining the *original* Words, and recalling them to their *genuine* Senſe, in Order to ſecure the *whole*.

The Uſe of unſcriptural Terms juſtified.

IN making of theſe *Explanations*, they are

(*b*) See upon the Article. (*c*) Art. 8. (*d*) Art. 20. (*e*) Bp. *Stillingfleet* in his rational Account, p. 55. (*f*) *Wheatley* on the Creeds. (*g*) *Waterland*'s Hiſt. of the Athan. Creed.

are obliged indeed to have Recourſe, ſometimes, to ſuch *Terms*, and *Expreſſions*, as did not occur in holy Writ, becauſe the Perſons they oppoſed, were famous for their *Artifice*, in diſtorting the Scriptures to their depraved Notions: But, ſince it is not the *Phraſe* or *Diction*, but the *Senſe* and *Meaning* of Scripture, that is, in Reality, the Word of God, whatever is expreſſed in *equivalent* Terms, or may be deduced by fair and neceſſary Inference, is a ſufficient Ground of Belief. Thus, (*h*) though there is no *explicit* Declaration in Scripture, that Chriſt is *co-eſſential* with God the Father; yet, ſince we find him affirming, that *he and his Father are one*, which, in Reaſon, can only be underſtood of an *Unity in Eſſence*, it muſt plainly follow, that the *Nicene* Creed, in Relation to this Article, is *true*, and capable of *Scripture Proof*. And, in like Manner, though there be no Propoſition expreſly declaring, that the *Holy Ghoſt is God*, yet if ſuch *Attributes* and *Operations* are aſcribed to him, *viz.* Omniſcience, Omnipreſence, Creation, and Preſervation, *&c.* as can properly belong to no other, than the *true God*, his Divinity muſt neceſſarily ariſe from him, and every Chriſtian be obliged to give him the Name and Honour, that is due unto it. It is the ſame Thing therefore, whether an Article is expreſſed in *Words*, or included in the *Senſe* of Scripture; only, as the Words are more liable to be *perverted*, than the Senſe, the Senſe ſeems to be the *ſurer* Foundation, and the *technical* Terms, made uſe of to explain it, are ſo far from *invalidating* the Scripture, that they are the only effectual Means to ſecure it from the *impious* Gloſſes, and *unnatural* Interpretations of thoſe, who endeavour to *wreſt* it to *their own* Deſtruction, the Seduction of others, and the Subverſion of the Chriſtian Faith.

With Regard to the Athanaſian *Creed.*

WHOEVER was the Author of the *Athanaſian* Creed; (*i*) whether it was the great *Athanaſius* himſelf, who, being caſt out of his *patriarchal* Seat at *Alexandria*, and accuſed by the *Arians* of Hereſy, to clear himſelf from ſo vile an Imputation, about the Year three hundred and forty, exhibited his *Confeſſion* of Faith to *Julius*, then Biſhop of *Rome*, which he afterwards ſent to the Emperor *Jovinian*, for his fuller Information concerning that Faith, which *Arianiſm* ſo violently oppugn'd; whether it was he, or (as (*k*) the late learned *Author of the Hiſtory of this Creed* rather imagines) *Hilary*, Archbiſhop of *Arles*, a Man of chief Repute in the *Gallican* Church, who, about the Year four hundred and thirty, upon the Revival of the *Arian* Controverſy in *Gaul*, compoſed this Form for the Uſe of his Dioceſs, which, being a *Summary* of the Faith maintained by *Athanaſius*, and, in a great Meaſure, compiled from his Works, might, in Proceſs of Time, obtain his Name, and be thought a Piece of his Compoſition: Whoever was the Author of this Creed, I ſay, it is certain, that, as ſoon as it appeared in the World, it was not *rejected*, for having *unſcriptural* Phraſes in it, but, both in the *Eaſtern* and *Weſtern* Churches, was received as a *Treaſure* of ineſtimable Price, and the very *Quinteſſence* of ancient Divinity.

The Creeds, when received into the Service *of the Church.*

IT was not however admitted into the publick *Offices* of the Church, even in *France* where it is ſuppoſed to have had its Birth, (*l*) till about the Middle of the *ſixth* Century, and not into the Service of the Church of *England*, until the *tenth*. The *Nicene Creed* (as it is called, with the *Additions*, which the Fathers at the Council of *Conſtantinople* made to it) had no Place in the publick Liturgies, till towards the Concluſion of the *fifth* Century, (*m*) when *Timothy*, Archbiſhop of *Conſtantinople*, and *Gnapheus*, Biſhop of *Antioch*, much about the ſame Time, preſcribed the perpetual Recital of it, at the publick Adminiſtration of divine Service: But that, which goes under the Name of the Apoſtles, was honoured with a more early Reception, and (*n*) by a Decree of *Damaſus*, who ſat Biſhop at *Rome* about the Year three hundred and ſeventy, was ordered to *be repeated every Day in the publick Liturgies, at the canonical Hours of Prayer.*

And when recited in ours.

THESE are the three Creeds, which the Church of *England* (in Conformity to the ancient

(*h*) *Moſs*'s Ser. Vol. III. (*i*) *Hooker*'s Eccl. Pol. and *Comber*'s Comp. to the Altar. (*k*) Dr. *Waterland*. (*l*) *Waterland*'s Crit. Hiſt. of this Creed. (*m*) Crit. Hiſt of the Apoſtles Creed. (*n*) *Comber*'s Comp. to the Temple.

ancient Uſage of moſt Churches in the *Weſt*) has thought proper to retain. (o) In the Form of *Baptiſm*, in the *Catechiſm*, in the *Viſitation* of the Sick, and in the *Order* of *Morning* and *Evening* Prayer, we make uſe of the Apoſtles Creed, becauſe it is ſhort and plain, and adapted to every Capacity: On *Sundays*, on all *Holidays*, and whenever the *Communion*-Office is read, we repeat * the *Nicene* Creed, wherein the eternal Generation of Chriſt, and the divine Nature and Operations of the Holy Ghoſt (Doctrines, that have their *Gainſayers* even among us) are more largely aſſerted; and (as if this were not enough) on the great and more ſolemn *Feſtivals* of the Church, and on ſuch a Number of *Saints Days*, as make it recited about once a Month through the whole Year, we are directed to *that Confeſſion of our Chriſtian Faith, commonly called the Creed of St. Athanaſius*, which is a firm Bulwark to the Creed of the Apoſtles (as (p) *Luther* calls it) and an excellent Preſervative againſt thoſe bold and impious Wretches, that are not afraid to make a *Jeſt* of a *Trinity in Unity*, and to ridicule *the Incarnation of the only Son of God*, two great and fundamental Points, which this moſt holy and accurate Syſtem, in ſome Meaſure, endeavours to illuſtrate, and with great Solidity does maintain.

A Summary of the whole, *and its* Inference.

AND now, upon a Review of what has been ſaid of the *Riſe* and *Origin* of Creeds in general; of the *Reaſons* and *Inducements* of their firſt Inſtitution; the *Extent* and *Compaſs* of the Doctrines, they contained; the *Power* of the Church to enlarge and explain them; the *Time* of their firſt Admiſſion into the publick *Liturgies*; the *Antiquity*, for which ſome were remarkable, and the great *Uniformity* which ran through the Senſe of them all: And, more particularly, of the *Nature* and Properties of that Creed, which is called by the Name of the Apoſtles; the high *Commendations*, which the *Ancients* gave it, the various *Appellations*, by which it was diſtinguiſhed; the *Arguments* on both Sides, to prove, and diſprove it to be the Work of the twelve Apoſtles; and in what Senſe, and Reſtriction, it may deſerve to be called an *apoſtolick Compoſition*: After what has been advanced on ſuch a Variety of Subjects, I ſay, the Apoſtles Exhortations are become unavoidable. (q) *Let us hold faſt the Profeſſion of our Faith without wavering*, (r) *being ready always to give an Anſwer to every Man, that aſketh us the Reaſon of the Hope, that is in us*; (s) *exhorting one another daily, while it is called to day*; *leſt there be in any of us an evil Heart of Unbelief, in departing from the living God*; and *praying always, with all Prayer and Supplication*, (t) *to the God of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, the Father of Glory, that the Eyes of our Underſtanding being enlightened, we may know, what is the Hope of his Calling, what the Riches of the Glory of his Inheritance in the Saints, and what the exceeding Greatneſs of his Power to us-ward, who believe.*

* What we call the *Nicene* Creed, is properly that of *Conſtantinople*, which was compoſed, in the *ſecond general* Council met at that City, and probably by the famous *Nazianzen* Ann. Dom. 383. in the Time of *Gratian* and *Theodoſius* the Great; approved by an hundred and fifty Biſhops (the Chief of which ſeems to be *Cyril* of *Jeruſalem*) and confirmed by the *Imperial* Authority: And the Reaſon, why it ſtill retains the Name of the *Nicene* Creed, is, becauſe it differs very little from that, which was compoſed in the firſt general Council at *Nice*; and becauſe the Council of *Conſtantinople* did not intend to make any new Creed, but only a fuller Explication of ſome *particular* Articles, for the Confutation of the *Arians*, the *Macedonian*, *Photinian*, and *Eunomian Hereticks*. *Comber*'s Companion to the Temple.

(o) *Wheatley* ibid. (p) De tribus Symbolis. (q) Heb. x. 23. (r) 1 Pet. iii. 15.
(s) Heb. iii. 12, 13. (t) Eph. i. 17, &c.

THE

ANALYSIS

OF THE

CREED.

- In the CREED there are two *Parts*, shewing what we are to believe,
  - I. Concerning GOD,
    - I. In general, that there is ONE God,
      - 1. The FATHER, described by
        - 1. his Nature, — Art. I. I believe in God the Father Almighty,
        - 2. his Works, Creation and Providence, — Maker of Heaven and Earth.
      - 2. The SON, described by
        - 1. his Name and Office, — Art. II. And in Jesus Christ
        - 2. his Nature,
          - 1. his Divinity, — his only Son our Lord,
          - 2. his Humanity, — Art. III. Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary,
        - 3. his Works, in order to our Redemption,
          - 1. His Passion, — Art. IV. Suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; He descended into Hell,
          - 2. His Resurrection, — Art. V. The third Day he rose again from the dead;
          - 3. His Ascension and Glory, — Art. VI. He ascended into Heaven, and sitteth on the right Hand of God the Father Almighty;
          - 4. His Return to Judgment, — Art. VII. From thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.
      - 3. The HOLY GHOST described by
        - 1. his Nature,
        - 2. his Office. — Art. VIII. I believe in the Holy Ghost;
    - II. That this *one* God is distinguished into THREE Persons,
  - II. Concerning OURSELVES.
    - 1. That we are Members of an holy Society.
      - 1. We are united together. — Art. IX. The Holy Catholick Church;
      - 2. We have Communion with eachother. — The Communion of Saints;
    - 2. That we have Privileges, by being Members thereof
      - 1. *Here*, Remission of Sins. — Art. X. The Forgiveness of Sins;
      - 2. Hereafter,
        - 1. To the Body, — Art. XI. The Resurrection of the Body,
        - 2. To both Soul and Body. — Art. XII. And the Life everlasting. Amen.

CREED

OF THE

A NEW EXPOSITION OF THE Apoſtles CREED.

CHAP. I. SECT. I.

ARTICLE I.

*** I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and Earth.**

The EXPOSITION.

The Introduction.

HE *that cometh to God,* (ſays the Author to the *Hebrews*) *muſt believe that he is, and that he is a Rewarder of them that diligently ſeek him.* Right Notions of the Exiſtence and Attributes of that Supreme Being, who created the World by his Power, preſerves and governs it by his Goodneſs and Wiſdom, and will finally judge it with Equity and Mercy, are the known Foundation of all Religion; and therefore it is with great Propriety, that the Confeſſion of *theſe* is made the *prime* Article of our Chriſtian Faith.

THE

* The *Syſtem* of Faith, which we are now going to expound, is ſometimes called *our Belief*, from the *firſt* Word in it; ſometimes *our Creed*, from a Word of the ſame Signification in the *Latin* Tongue; and particularly *the Apoſtles Creed*, either from its *Antiquity*, as being compos'd, either *in* or *near* the Apoſtles Time, and, according to their Number, conſiſting of *twelve* Articles; or from its *Conformity* to the Doctrine, which they taught, and is contain'd in this ſhort *Compendium*, which, St. *Auſtin* tells us, is *the Illumination of the Soul, and the Perfection of Believers; by which the Bond of Infidelity is diſſolv'd, the Gate of Life open'd, and the Glory of Faith is ſhewn: Little indeed in Words, but great in Myſteries; ſhort, as not to oppreſs the Memory; yet comprehenſive, ſo as to exceed the Underſtanding. Worthy therefore is this Creed to be attended to, ſince whatever is prefigur'd in the Patriarchs, declar'd in the Scriptures, or foretold in the Prophets concerning the bleſſed Trinity, and the Neceſſity of our Saviour's Incarnation, Death, and Crucifixion, is contain'd in it.* Now the principal *Articles* of this Creed were drawn up at firſt, as a *Form*, which Perſons, who came to be *baptiz'd* into the *Chriſtian* Communion, were taught to repeat, and profeſs openly, and every one diſtinctly for himſelf, before he was admitted into the Chriſtian Church by that holy *Ordinance*. For this Reaſon it was thought proper, that it ſhould be penn'd in the *ſingular Number*, in order to anſwer the chief Deſign of its Compoſition: For, at that Time (as well as now) among a Multitude of Converts, there might be ſeveral *Hypocrites*, and *Unbelievers*, ſcatter'd up and down among the *Faithful*; and therefore, as no Man could in-

THE Word *Faith*, indeed, has been made a Term of great Ambiguity. It admits of various Significations in the Holy Scriptures; and has afforded Argument for many warm Diſputes, and nice Diſtinctions: But, under our preſent View, and as it relates to the Principles of Religion, compris'd in the ſhort *Summary* now before us, it may not improperly be ſaid to be, " a firm *Aſſent* of " the Mind to the Truth of every *Propo-* " *ſition* therein contain'd, partly upon the " Evidence of Reaſon, but chiefly upon the " Teſtimony and Authority of that God, " who can by no Means deceive us". When, therefore, in the initial Words of it, we ſay, *I believe* † *in God*, our Meaning is, " that, upon due Conviction, we freely " acknowledge, and openly profeſs, and are " fully perſuaded of the Truth of this Pro- " poſition, *that there is a God:*" And, to illuſtrate ſo great a *Verity*, it will be ſufficient, I conceive, to produce ſome of the known *Arguments* in Proof of it; to refute the popular *Objections*, that are commonly made againſt it; and ſo, with a proper *Diſſertation*, conclude this Section: Which is the conſtant Method I propoſe to myſelf, in the Courſe of this Work.

The Being of a God, prov'd from Univerſal Conſent.

WHATEVER the Fate of (*a*) *innate Ideas* may be, and whether or no the great Creator of the Univerſe has originally impreſs'd on all Mens Minds * a Character of himſelf, which every Day improves more and more, according as they emerge from Infancy, and advance in Years; this we may lay down for a certain Truth——that the Conſent of Man-

ſpect the Secrets of another's Heart, he could not be reſponſible for his Neighbour's Faith, nor ſay with Aſſurance, *we believe*. To *pray* for another, and to *bleſs* God for his Mercies extended to another, we are in Duty bound. The Apoſtle has inform'd us, that *the effectual fervent Prayer of a righteous Man availeth much* for the Benefit of his Brother, *James* v. 16. but, as every one is to ſtand or fall by his own Faith, every one is obliged to manifeſt it by his own particular Confeſſion; and that Confeſſion made with devout Attention, with great Reverence and Reſolution: For which Reaſon, it has been a long prevailing Cuſtom, for Men to repeat their Creed in a *ſtanding* Poſture, and in ſome Places (particularly in *Poland* and *Lithuania*) for the *Nobles* and *Gentlemen* to do it with their *Swords* drawn, thereby to teſtify, that it was a *Confeſſion*, wherein they *gloried*, and were ſo far from being aſham'd of it, that they were ready to maintain it to the utmoſt *Period* of their Lives, and (if Occaſion was) to ſeal it with the Teſtimony of their deareſt *Blood*. I have only one Remark more, *viz.* that the Words *I believe*, tho' only twice expreſs'd in the Body of the Creed, are nevertheleſs ſuppos'd to have relation to every *Branch*, or Article of it; and, accordingly, muſt be underſtood, and ſupplied in every Step we take, through the whole Courſe of our Confeſſion. *Wake* on the Cat. *Newcomb*'s Catec. Lect. *King*'s Crit. Hiſt. and *Pearſon* on the Creed.

† The Uſe of the Word *God*, to ſignify the Supreme Being, ſeems to be of great Antiquity in our *Northern* Nations. The *Saxons* indeed had ſeveral other Gods in After-ages, but, in the moſt antient Times, they worſhipped *Gead*, as their Sovereign Deity, from which we have derived to us our *Engliſh* Word *God*. Now this Name ſeems to have been given from the Adjective *good*, which was formerly pronounced Gead, or Gude, and has Reference to one of the principal *Attributes* of God, his *Goodneſs*. For, not only in *ours*, but in other Languages likewiſe, the Name of God is taken from ſome *Attribute* of the Divine Nature, even as JEHOVAH, in *Hebrew*, ſignifies *Self-Exiſtence*, and THEOS, in *Greek*, being deriv'd from a Verb, which ſignifies *to ſee*, is a Name given to the Deity upon Account of his *Providence*. It is to be obſerved likewiſe, that, in moſt *primitive* Creeds, whether *Latin* or *Greek*, the Article runs, *I believe in* ONE GOD, or in THE ONLY GOD, in Contradiction to the Notions and Errors of ſome Men, who oppos'd this fundamental Point of the Chriſtian Religion, *The Unity of the Divine Eſſence*. The late learned Author of the *Critical Hiſtory* of the Creed is of Opinion, that this *Addition* was made to it, in the ſecond *Century*, in Oppoſition to the *Valentinians*, *Marcionites*, and other *Gnoſticks*, who denied the Unity of the Godhead, and aſſerted two *eternal*, *co-exiſtent*, and *independent* Beings, one the *Original* of all Good, and the other the *Fountain* of all Evil. Now, that there were ſuch *Hereſies*, is plain from *Iræneus*, *Tertullian*, and others, who wrote againſt them; but then it is as manifeſt from the ſame Writers, that they uſed this Confeſſion of ONE GOD in the Creed, not as a *Point lately* devis'd, but what they had receiv'd from the *Apoſtles* themſelves; For *this is the Rule of Faith*, ſays *Tertullian*, *by which we believe that there is* ONLY ONE GOD, *Almighty*, *Maker of the World*; *and this Rule*, he adds, *has come down to us from the Beginning of the Goſpel*. From which one Teſtimony (without going any farther) it plainly appears, that the antient *Fathers* oppos'd the Confeſſion of *one God* to the *Hereticks*, not as a novel *Poſition*, but what was delivered down to them by TRADITION from the Apoſtles, and therefore was all along confeſs'd from the very Beginning of *Chriſtianity*. Upon the whole therefore we may conclude, that the *Unity* of the Godhead was not *occaſionally* inſerted in the Creed by the Governors of the Church at that Time, in order to oppoſe the Doctrine of *Hereticks*, (as the Hiſtorian would make us believe) but was at firſt fram'd by the Apoſtles themſelves, to the Intent that, in a ſolemn *Form* of Confeſſion, all *Heathen Proſelytes* might renounce their Errors of *Idolatry* and *Polytheiſm*, and acknowledge the Exiſtence of *one God only*, before they were received into the Boſom of the Church. *Barrow* on the Creed. *King*'s Crit. Hiſt. of it; and *Grabe*'s Notes on Bp. *Bull*'s Judgment of the Cath. Church.

(*a*) Vide *Lock* upon Human Underſtanding.

* Some are of Opinion, that the Soul of Man is at firſt like *a fair ſmooth Table*, without any actual Characters or Notions imprinted in it; and that all the Knowledge which we have, comes ſucceſſively by Senſation, Inſtruction, and rational Collection; and if ſo, then muſt we not refer the Apprehenſion of a Deity to any connate Notion, or imbred Opinion. *Pearſon* on the Creed.

Mankind in this Reſpect is ſo *univerſal*, that *no Nation* (as *Tully* expreſſes it) (*a*) *was ever ſo extremely barbarous and ſavage, as not to believe the Exiſtence of a Deity; and, by ſome kind of Service or other, to teſtify their Veneration of him.* But now this muſt have proceeded, (*b*) either from ſome Inſtruction and Inſtitution at firſt (very probably of God himſelf) and ſo have been convey'd down from Age to Age by a conſtant *Tradition*; or muſt have aroſe from the Nature of Man's Mind, which has this Notion of a Deity ſtamp'd upon it, or (what is all one) is of † ſuch a Make and Compoſition, that, in the free Exerciſe of its Faculties, it will find out God.

THAT there are ſeveral Notions, generally received by Mankind, and confin'd to no particular Sect, Nation, or Time, and therefore by the *Greeks* called *common Apprehenſions*, by the *Roman* Orator, an *innate Law*, and, in the *Apoſtle's* Phraſe, *a Law written in our Hearts*, (*c*) is a Matter that can admit of no Debate; and thereupon we cannot but think it highly reaſonable, that he, who is the great Creator of the World, ſhould ſet ſome *ſuch Mark* of himſelf upon thoſe *intelligent* Beings, that are capable of worſhipping him, that thereby he may lead them to the *Author* of their Exiſtence, to whom their *Obedience* is due, and to whom their *Adorations* are to be directed.

The Beginning *of Things.*

HOWEVER this be, (*d*) ſince it is certain, that we ourſelves, as well as all other Beings, are weak and dependent Creatures, which neither could give ourſelves Exiſtence, nor preſerve it by any Power of our own; it muſt neceſſarily follow, that the Being, we now have, we derived from ſome *ſuperior* and more powerful Cauſe; and that this ſuperior Cauſe muſt either be the *firſt* Cauſe, (which is the proper Notion of a God) or by Degrees muſt, at laſt, lead us to the *firſt*, becauſe an *infinite Succeſſion of Cauſalities*, which will produce nothing, is a groſs Abſurdity and Contradiction. Now, that Cauſe which was *firſt*, and gave Riſe to all other Beings, muſt needs itſelf be *eternal*, and without Beginning, otherwiſe nothing could have been produc'd at all. For, (*e*) if there was not ſome Being without Beginning, there was a Time when there was no Being; and if there was a Time, when nothing at all *was*, then nothing ever could have been, for *by nothing nothing could be produced.* Either therefore it muſt be aſſerted, (*f*) that, at this Time, there is nothing exiſting, and that all the World is but a *Deluſion*, and fantaſtical Appearance, without any real Subſtance, (which no Man in his Senſes, I ſuppoſe, will maintain) or that, if there is any Thing really in Being now, there muſt have been ſomething from all Eternity: But, (*g*) ſince we are ſure, that ourſelves exiſt, and many other Things about us, we cannot but conclude, that there is an *Eternal* Being, who had no Beginning of Exiſtence, and by whom all other Beings (that are not eternal) are made to exiſt; for if (*h*) every Houſe is built by ſome Man, the Apoſtle's Inference cannot be amiſs, *he that built all Things is God.*

The Order *and* Beauty *of the World.*

THE Apoſtle, however, has pointed us out a more obvious Way, whereby we may come to the Knowledge of a divine Exiſtence, when he tells us, that (*i*) *the inviſible Things of God, from the Creation of the World, are clearly ſeen; being underſtood by the Things that are made, even his eternal Power, and Godhead:* For hereupon we may be allow'd to aſk, (*k*) whoſe Power it was, that framed this beautiful and ſtately Fabrick, this immenſe and ſpacious World? (*l*) That *ſpake the Word, and it was done*; that *commanded, and it ſtood faſt?* That formed theſe vaſt and numberleſs Orbs of Heaven, and diſpoſed them into ſuch regular and uniform Motions? That appointed *the Sun to rule the Day*, and the Moon and Stars to govern the Night? That encompaſſed the Earth with *Air*, fitted, by its *Spring*, to maintain the Breath of Animals; by its *Motion*, to cauſe Sounds; and by its *Tranſparency*, to diffuſe Light? That divided the Water into Springs, Fountains, Rivers, and Seas for our Accommodation and Traffick; to afford *Drink*, for our Refreſhment; *Fiſh* for our Nouriſhment; and *Vapours*, to deſcend in fruitful Showers upon the Face of the Earth? That clothed the Face of the Earth with Plants and Flowers, ſo exquiſitely adorn'd with various and inimitable

(*a*) De Nat. Deorum, Lib. i. (*b*) *Leng*'s Ser. at *Boyle*'s Lect.

† When it is ſaid, that the Notion of God is *natural* to the Soul, the Meaning of it is, that there is ſuch a Faculty in the Soul of Man, whereby, upon the Uſe of Reaſon, he can form within himſelf a ſettled Notion of ſuch a firſt and ſupreme Being, as is endowed with all poſſible Perfections. *Wilkins* of the Prin. of Nat. Religion.

(*c*) Rom. ii. 15. (*d*) *Clarke*'s Ser. Vol. I. (*e*) *Burnet*'s Ser. at *Boyle*'s Lect. (*f*) *Stephens*'s Ser. Vol. I. (*g*) *Bull*'s Ser. Vol. I. (*h*) Heb. iii. 4. (*i*) Rom. i. 20. (*k*) *Clarke*'s Ser. Vol. I. (*l*) Pſal. xxxiii. 9.

imitable Beauties, that (*a*) *even* Solomon, *in all his Glory, was not arrayed like one of them?* That repleniſh'd the World with Animals of various Kinds, and wonderful Make, ſo *different* from each other in *particular*, and yet, in their main Compoſition, ſo very much *alike?* And laſtly, (that we may not loſe ourſelves in this agreeable Search) that diverſified the *Climates* of the Earth into ſuch a commodious *Variety*, that, be they never ſo diſtant in their Situation, each one has it proper Seaſons, (*b*) *Day and Night, Seed-time and Harveſt, Summer and Winter?* (*c*) *O Lord! how manifold are thy Works, in Wiſdom haſt thou made them all; the Earth is full of thy Riches, and ſo is the great and wide Sea alſo, wherein are Things creeping innumerable, both ſmall and great Beaſts.*

Its Preſervation *therein.*

And, as the Creation of the World, ſo the *Preſervation* of it, in the ſame beautiful Order, is a perpetual Demonſtration of the Being of a God: For, what leſs than an Almighty Arm could ſteer the Courſes of thoſe vaſt heavenly Bodies, floating, as it were, in the liquid *Æther*, and, by a conſtant Interpoſition, prevent their outraying, and running foul upon one another? Could every *Morning rouſe* (*d*) *the Sun from its Tabernacle; make it come forth as a Bridegroom out of his Chamber*, and, *as a Giant, rejoice to run its Race?* Could every *Evening* overſpread the Firmament with a *ſable* Mantle; then beſpangle it with the radiant Stars, and ſo call forth the Moon to give a vicarious Light to the Inhabitants of the Earth, without ever once failing or diſappointing them? Could every *Spring*, raiſe and revive the latent Juices of the Plants and Herbs, which the former Winter ſeemingly had deſpoil'd, and by the gladſome Return of every Thing to Life, teach us the Certainty of our own *Reſurrection?* And could, every *Summer*, by the Warmth of the Sun, and the *Clouds dropping Fatneſs*, bring the Fruits of the Earth to ſuch a Maturity, that (*e*) *the little Hills, on every Side, rejoice*, and the *Valleys do ſtand ſo full with Corn*, that they ſeem even *to laugh and ſing?* The Truth is, no Man that gives himſelf Liberty to think can ever imagine, that the Sun, and Moon, and other innumerable Hoſts of Heaven, can be ſo exactly *marſhall'd*, and conducted every Day, without the Command and Orders of ſome ſkilful *General*; that Millions of living Creatures, (*f*) which abound in the Air, Earth, and Water, can be ſo conſtantly ſupported and maintain'd, without the Care and Contrivance of ſome common *Provedore*; or that ſo large a Family, as that of the whole World, ſhould not very often want Neceſſaries, did not our heavenly Father provide for every Member of it, and, (*g*) *when he openeth his Hand, fill all Things living with Plenteouſneſs.*

The Make of the Human Body.

The Royal Pſalmiſt, ſpeaking of the Formation of Man's Body, (*h*) *I will give thanks unto God*, ſays he, *for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: Thine Eyes did ſee my Subſtance yet being imperfect, and in thy Book were all my Members written, which Day by Day were faſhioned, when as yet there was none of them.* The *Fœtus* in the Womb, which, from a ſlender Beginning, and without the Mother's Care or Concern, increaſes in Bulk, and is form'd and faſhion'd in its ſecret Receſs, until it arrive to the Proportion of a Man, is one of the greateſt Wonders in Nature; and, when it comes into the World, of what a vaſt Variety of *Materials*, far ſurpaſſing the moſt celebrated Works of the niceſt Artificers, and all ranged in ſuch Places, and in ſuch Order, as may ſerve their proper Ends, is it found to be compos'd! (*i*) In every Finger of our Hands, (ſays a great Preacher upon this Subject,) "there are Bones, and Griſtles, "and Ligaments, and Membranes, and "Muſcles, and Tendons, and Nerves, and "Arteries, and Veins, and Skin, and Cu"ticle, and Nail; together with Marrow "and Fat, and Blood, and other nutricious "Juices, and all theſe ſolid Parts of a de"terminate Size, and Figure, and Texture, "and made up of Myriads of little Fibres "and Filaments, not diſcernible by the naked "Eye:" And, if the Parts are ſo innumerable, that go to conſtitute ſo ſmall a Member, as the Finger, we cannot but look upon *that Part*, and much more upon the whole Body (wherein appear ſo much Fitneſs, and Uſe, and Subſerviency to innumerable Functions) as the Effect of Contrivance and Skill, and, conſequently, the Workmanſhip of a moſt intelligent and beneficial Being.

The Faculties of the Soul.

After this, we need not take Notice of (*k*) the Structure and Mechaniſm of the *Eye*

(*a*) Matt. vi. 29. (*b*) Gen. viii. 22. (*c*) Pſal. civ. 24, 25. (*d*) Pſal. xix. 5. (*e*) Pſal. lxv. 12, &c. (*f*) *Woodward*'s Ser. at *Boyle*'s Lect. and *Barrow* on the Creed. (*g*) Pſal. cxlv. 16. (*h*) *Bentley*'s Ser. at *Boyle*'s Lect. (*i*) *Bentley*'s Ser. at *Boyle*'s Lect. (*k*) *Woodward*'s Ser. at *Boyle*'s Lect.

Eye, and all the curious Organs of the other Senſes; of the *Laboratory* of Life in the *Heart*, or of the Palace of Thought in the *Brain*; ſince we find nothing in this viſible World, that has ſuch noble Faculties and Operations, as the Soul of Man, which, beſides the Powers of Senſation and Perception, (that perhaps may be common to other Creatures) (*a*) can reflect upon itſelf, and its own Ideas, as well as other Matters, that are without it; can compare, reaſon, and judge of Things paſt, preſent, and future; can weigh, and conſider, and adapt Ends to Means, and act always with ſome Deſign of *Good*, either *real* or *apparent*; can invent, and contrive, and perfect many noble Arts and Sciences, by obſerving the mutual Dependance of Things, and conſidering the Nature of Cauſes and Effects; can form to itſelf abſtract Notions, and create Subjects of Thought, which have no other Exiſtence but in itſelf, and, by judging of their Agreement or Diſagreement with one another, produce very uſeful Truths; can repreſent to itſelf, in an Inſtant, Things at the greateſt Diſtance, recal the paſt, and pry into future Times, as if they were really preſent, and all this without the Trouble of *local Motion*; and, laſtly, can, in the *Twinkling of an Eye*, tranſlate itſelf from Earth to Heaven; there paſs into the inviſible World of Spirits; view (*b*) the *innumerable Company of Angels* attending their Creator's Throne; mix itſelf with the *general Aſſembly and Church of the Firſt-born*; converſe, as it were, with the Souls *of juſt Men made perfect*, and fix its Contemplation and Wonder *upon God, the Judge of all, and* Jeſus, *the Mediator of the new Covenant*. Theſe, and many more, are the Powers and Properties of an human Soul, which ſhew it to be an active *intelligent* Being, by ſome of the moſt ſagacious *Heathens* reputed a Thing *Celeſtial* and *Divine*, or a *little God, harbour'd in an human Body*, as *Seneca* was wont to call it.

And the Verdict of Conſcience.

To make this Opinion more certain, we muſt remember, that Almighty God has placed in our Breaſts the Faculty, which we call *Conſcience*, as his Deputy and Vicegerent, to revive, comfort, and ſupport, or to deject, terrify, and torment us, according as we have acquitted ourſelves to that great Author of our Being. I ſay to *that great Author of our Being*, for, without a reflex Act upon God, the Teſtimony of our Conſciences would never amount to a Senſe of Pleaſure or Pain, of Terror or Delight. For, (*c*) as no *ill* Man *fears* from himſelf, *i. e.* no ill Man fears, leſt, at any Time hereafter, he ſhall come into the Mind of *puniſhing* himſelf, ſo no *good* Man *hopes* from himſelf, that he ſhall, at any Time hereafter, be at the Diſcretion of *rewarding* himſelf; and therefore the ſimple Verdict of our Conſcience, upon good or evil Actions, would never be able to produce Hope or Fear, Joy or Grief in us, were it not for this farther Apprehenſion, that there is a God, who knows all, as well as we, and who will take Care, ſome Time or other, to make Retributions accordingly.

THAT God therefore might not *leave himſelf without a Witneſs*, he has made every Man's Conſcience his ſtanding Remembrancer, and fix'd the Notion of himſelf ſo indelibly in our Hearts, that even thoſe, who have endeavour'd to obliterate it moſt, have found it a Taſk too difficult for them, and, upon ſundry Occaſions, been compell'd to acknowledge, what, in the Days of their Security, and in the Wantonneſs of their Wit, they have affected to deny. (*d*) "Let *Caligula* then profeſs himſelf an *A-*
"*theiſt*, and, with that Profeſſion, hide his
"Head, and run under his Bed, when the
"Thunder ſtrikes his Ears, and Lightning
"flaſhes in his Eyes; theſe terrible Works
"of Nature put him in Mind of the *Power*,
"and his own Guilt of the *Juſtice* of
"God;" and, tho' he fain would gainſay it, his quaking, and trembling, and frightful Looks ſtrongly aſſert that ſuperior Being, (*e*) *who maketh the Clouds his Chariot*, and (*f*) at whoſe Rebuke, *the Pillars of Heaven tremble, and are aſtoniſh'd*.

A Summary of the principal Arguments.

THUS the natural Conſcience, innate Notions, and univerſal Apprehenſions of Mankind; the Imperfection of all other Things, and their Incapacity to be the Cauſe of their own Being; the Greatneſs, the Variety, the Beauty, the Order, and Harmony of the World; the Continuance of Things in the ſame Situation, and providential Proviſion for all Creatures; the Texture of the Body, and the Faculties of the Soul of Man; I may add, (*g*) its inceſſant Enquiry after Happineſs, ardent Deſire of Immortality, dread of inviſible Powers, and Expectance of a future Judgment; together with the won-

(*a*) *Leng*'s Ser. at *Boyle*'s Lect. (*b*) Heb. xii. 23, 24. (*c*) *Young*'s Ser. Vol. I. (*d*) *Pearſon* on the Creed. (*e*) Pſ. civ. 3. (*f*) Job xxvi. 11. (*g*) *Leng*'s Ser. at *Boyle*'s Lect.

derful Sagacity of Animals, and their various Inſtincts; the Original of Motion, and Principle of Gravitation; the wonderful Diſcovery of Murthers and Villainies; the remarkable Puniſhments of the Wicked, and Deliverances of the Righteous; in ſhort, whatever we obſerve in Nature, in the Heavens, and upon the Earth, and whatever is ſupernatural, as Miracles, Prodigies, and Propheſies; all theſe Things conſpire to prove that there is a God, and (*a*) that Man, who neglects to infer a divine Exiſtence from what he ſees, and reflects on every Day, acts, in Reality, as *ſtupid* a Part, as if, from the conſtant Continuance of the Day-light, he ſhould ceaſe to obſerve that there is ſuch a Thing in Heaven as the Sun, the Fountain, from whence that Light does proceed.

The OBJECTION.

" BUT the Being of God (however " deducible from Reaſon) is not near " ſo ſelf-evident, as the *Light of the Sun*; " nor are the Arguments, that are com- " monly alledg'd in Proof of it, ſo very " convincing, as we may imagine. For, " beſides * the *Difficulty* of having the No- " tion of any Thing, that is not the Ob- " ject of Senſe, and the *Poſſibility* of ac- " counting for the World's Creation, and " all the Appearances in it, without a di- " vine *Interpoſition*; this *univerſal Con- " ſent*, which we ſo much talk of, is far " from being a *Reality*; ſince, in ſeveral " Parts of the World, there are † whole " Nations, that have no Conception of a " Deity, nor any Form of religious Wor- " ſhip among them; ſince, in ſeveral Ages, " there have been great Men, and no mean " *Pretenders* to Learning and Philoſophy, " who have openly profeſs'd the Principles " of *Atheiſm*; and ſince, in our own " Times, the Wickedneſs of many is ſo " great, and ſo contrary to all Senſe of a " God, that we can hardly ſuppoſe they " have any natural *Perſuaſion* of his Being, " nor any Remonſtrances of *Conſcience*, " (which is made another Indication of it) " to cure and reſtrain them.

" BUT, allowing theſe Apprehenſions of " a Deity to be more *general*, yet might " they not be occaſioned by ſome *Preju- " dice*, or human *Infirmity* at firſt? The " Mind of Man, we know, is very *timo- " rous* and *jealous* of the worſt; very " thoughtleſs and unacquainted with Things; " and, in thoſe, who have gain'd a Superi- " ority over others, very *imperious* and *aſ- " ſuming*: And therefore why may we not " ſuppoſe, that either ‖ Fear, or § Igno- " rance, or ‡ Craft and Policy, gave Riſe " to this Notion of a God; that either " ſome *weak* People, at firſt, form'd the " Conception of an inviſible Being, infinite- " ly powerful, and able to do them *hurt*; " or ſome *ignorant* People took it up, be- " cauſe

(*a*) *Clarke* on the Church Catech.

* Mr. *Hobbes* ſays expreſly, that we cannot have any *Idea* of God, and that thoſe, who venture to diſcourſe *Philoſophically* concerning him, or to reaſon of his Nature from his *Attributes*, loſing their Underſtanding in the very firſt Attempt, they fall from one Inconvenience to another, without End or Number, and do only diſcover their own *Aſtoniſhment* and *Ruſticity*. Leviath. Part IV. Chap. 46.

† To this Purpoſe ſeveral Authors and Travellers tell us, that in *Japan*, *Brazil*, *South Sumatra*, and about the *Magellick* Sea; in *Saldania*, the *Caribbee Iſlands*, and about the *Cape of Good Hope*, there are whole Clans of People, among whom there is to be found no Notion of a God. Vide *Tavernier*, Sir *Tho. Herbert*, and *Lock* of Human Under.

‖ The true Reaſon, ſays *Spinoſa*, why all Men are ſubject by Nature to *Superſtition* (by which the Writers of this Stamp always mean Religion in general) is from *Fear*, and not (as ſome have imagin'd) from any confus'd Idea of a God, which they will have to be impreſs'd upon all Mankind. Tract. Theol. Polit. in the Preface.

§ *Lucretius* will have it, that not only *Fear*, but *Ignorance* likewiſe, of ſecond Cauſes, gave the firſt Riſe to the Notion of a God. His Senſe, according to our Tranſlation, is this:

For Ignorance of Cauſes heaves the Mind
To Powers above, as Birds ſoar high, when blind.
We ſee the Effects, but when the Cauſes lie
Beyond the Ken of vulgar Reaſon's Eye,
We then aſcribe them to the Deity.

CREECH Lib. 5.

‡ *Tully* tells us, that there were ſome in his Time, (and no doubt long before) who ſuppos'd that the Opinion and Belief of the Gods was invented by *wiſe Men*, for the Good of the *Commonwealth*; and *Plato* acquaints us, that the antient *Atheiſts* did affirm, that the Gods were not by *Nature*, but by *Art* and *Laws* only, and ſo were different, in different Places, according as the different *Humours* of the Law-givers chanc'd to determine the Matter. *De Legibus*, Lib. 10.

"cauſe, being Strangers to the Powers of "*Matter*, they were not able to ſolve the "*Phænomena* of the Univerſe without an "intending Cauſe; or ſome *great Prince* "or Miniſter of State deviſ'd the firſt No-"tion of it, as a Means to keep People in "Awe and Order, which, in Time, was "confirm'd, and ſo handed down from one "Generation to another?

Anſwer'd, by ſhewing we have an intelligent Part.

We own, indeed, with the Author of the Book of *Wiſdom*, (*a*) that *the Thoughts of mortal Men are miſerable; for the corruptible Body preſſeth down the Soul, and the earthly Tabernacle weigheth down the Mind, which muſeth upon many Things; and hardly do we gueſs aright at Things that are upon Earth, and, with Labour, do we find the Things that are before us:* But, notwithſtanding this, we cannot but think it a vile and unjuſt Degradation of human Underſtanding, to bring it almoſt down to the Level of Beaſts that periſh, by confining all its Knowledge to the Objects of Senſe only, when it appears ſo plainly, that, in all Mankind, there are *intellectual* Powers, ſuperior to, and different from the *ſenſitive*. (*b*) The Points, Lines, and Figures, (for Inſtance) which are the Subject of *Mathematical* Demonſtration, are not perceiv'd by our Senſes, nor ſuppos'd to have any real Exiſtence, in like Manner as the Ideas of Virtue, of Honeſty, Benevolence, Gratitude, Juſtice, Compaſſion, and the like, have no ſenſible Qualities; and yet we can *reaſon* upon them as clearly, draw *Conſequences* from them as fairly, and reſt as much ſatisfied in their *Evidence*, as in our Knowledge of the Extenſion, Gravity, and other Affections of Matter; and this plainly ſhews, that the *Spirit of a Man*, which is of an higher Extract, than Matter and Motion, according to the Phraſe of the great King *Solomon*, *is the Candle of the Lord, which ſearcheth all the inward Parts of the Belly.*

And ſome Notion *of a God*

We readily grant, with holy *Job*, that (*c*) *we cannot, by ſearching, find out God, nor diſcover the Almighty to Perfection*; but ſtill we are apt to imagine, that there is a great Difference between *apprehending* and *comprehending* a Thing; between knowing a Thing really to be, and underſtanding every Thing, that is to be known about it. (*d*) We are utterly ignorant of the Subſtance or Eſſence of all other Beings, even of thoſe Things, which we converſe with moſt familiarly, and think we underſtand beſt. There is not ſo mean and contemptible a Plant, or Animal, that does not confound the moſt enlarg'd Underſtanding upon Earth: Nay, even the ſimpleſt and plaineſt of all inanimate Beings have their Eſſence or Subſtance hidden from us in the deepeſt and moſt impenetrable Obſcurity: Why then ſhould it be thought a ſtrange Thing, or made an Objection againſt the Being of a God, that we cannot comprehend him? We cannot indeed comprehend the Nature of God, becauſe we have ſhallow, limitted, and finite Capacities, and the Deity contains in itſelf all poſſible Excellency and Perfection; but (*e*) from thence to infer, that we can have no Idea, no Knowledge at all of him, is as abſurd and incongruous, as to deny, that there is ſuch a Thing as the Sun, becauſe we cannot tell how many Miles it is in *Diameter*, how far its *Diſtance* is from us, or from whence it is *ſupplied* with Matter inexhauſtible to continue its Fire and Heat.

The Manner how to form ſuch a Notion.

(*f*) The greateſt Certainty, that we have of the Exiſtence of any Thing, is that of our own *Being*: For, whatever can *think*, *will*, and *determine*, muſt needs be *ſomething*, and have a real Exiſtence. Now, if we ourſelves do actually exiſt, we cannot but ſuppoſe, that theſe Powers and Operations of *thinking*, *willing*, and *determining* proceeded from ſomething or other, as their efficient Cauſe. 'Tis a Contradiction to ſay, that any Thing can make itſelf; and therefore there muſt have been ſomething before the World began, that gave Exiſtence to all other, itſelf eternal, and unoriginated, becauſe there could be nothing before it, to give it Being.

If we carry our Thoughts a little farther into the Nature of this great Being, we cannot but perceive, that, as it has eternally exiſted for the *Time paſt*, ſo it muſt continue to exiſt for ever for the *Time to come*; becauſe there is nothing in itſelf, nor in any Thing without it, that can poſſibly occaſion its Deſtruction. Such a Being therefore muſt be properly *eternal*, and *neceſſarily ſelf-exiſtent*, without Beginning and without End: Such a Being muſt be the *Origin* and Creator of all Things, becauſe it was *prior* to every Thing, and nothing can be the Cauſe of itſelf; and ſuch a Being muſt be

(*a*) Wiſd. ix. 14, &c. (*b*) *Abernethy's* Ser. Vol. I. (*c*) Job xi. 7. (*d*) *Clarke's* Ser. at *Boyle's* Lect. (*e*) *Harris's* Ser. at *Boyle's* Lect. (*f*) *Harris* ibid.

be the *Author* and Giver of all thoſe Faculties and Perfections, that are diſcernible in his Creatures. Knowledge therefore and Wiſdom, Thought and Reaſoning, and all other Excellencies, muſt come *originally* from him, that gave us Being; and, as nothing can communicate to another what it has not, ſo all the Powers and Faculties, which we ſee and admire in his Works, this eternal and ſelf-exiſting Being muſt have in itſelf, and that in the greateſt Perfection. He muſt have the Power of doing all Things, that are poſſible to be done, and therefore be *Almighty*. He muſt know all Things, that are poſſible to be known, and therefore be *Omniſcient*; he muſt viſit and inſpect all Things, both in Heaven and Earth, and therefore be *Omnipreſent*; and he muſt be *wiſe* and *good*, *juſt* and *true*, *merciful* and *gracious*, to the higheſt Degree, becauſe we meet with frequent Indications of *theſe* among the Rank of his rational Creatures.

This ſolves all natural Phænomena.

THUS, we come to the Notion of a God, and his Attributes, by a plain and familiar *Chain* of Conſequences, obvious to the meaneſt Capacity, that can but think at all: And this Notion (if rightly improv'd) is not only ſufficient for the Conduct of human Life, and for our Inſtruction in the great Duties of Faith and Hope, Fear and Love, Honour and Obedience, Worſhip and Thankſgiving to the Author of our Being, but will account likewiſe for all his marvellous Works; for the *Creation* of the World out of nothing, for the regular *Revolution* of heavenly Bodies, for the *Suſpenſion* of the Earth in the Air, for the bleſſed Effects of its *annual* and *diurnal* Motion, for the wonderful Make and Growth of Plants, for the *organical* Texture of all Bodies, the ſurpriſing Sagacity and *Inſtinct* of Animals, the noble Powers and *Faculties* of the Soul of Man, and other ſtrange *Phænomena* in Nature, which every *unbelieving Scheme*, with all its Suppoſitions and *Poſtulata*, muſt utterly deſpair of doing.

Which Atheiſtical *Schemes cannot do.*

THE Truth is, every ſuch *Hypotheſis* is ſo precarious and ill-grounded, and, when once enquir'd into, ſo very ſenſeleſs, and ridiculouſly abſurd, that barely to mention the Principles of ſome of them, in my Opinion, is * Confutation enough. "That "not only the *Matter*, but alſo the *Frame* "of the World, is eternal; that, as to the "main, it was always as it is, and *ſelf-* "*exiſtent*; and that there hath been, from "all Eternity, a Succeſſion of Men, and "other Creatures, without any *firſt Cauſe* "of their Being." Theſe Notions are not more abſurd, than are the Opinions of others, who, being profeſs'd Advocates for Matter and Motion, are not aſham'd to aſſert, "that an infinite Number of Atoms, "moving in an infinite empty Space, after, "innumerable *Trials* and Rencounters, did, "at length, ſettle themſelves into this beau-"tiful Frame of the World; and that the "Earth, being at that Time in its full "Vigour and Fruitfulneſs, after many im-"perfect *Eſſays*, did bring forth, at laſt, "Men, and all other Kinds of living Crea-"tures, in their proper Shape and Make."

† THESE are the wild and extravagant Notions of ſome Perſons, who, in the Ages wherein they lived, were reputed the *Wits* of

* Thoſe, that are deſirous to ſee a fuller Confutation of theſe *Hypotheſes*, may conſult moſt of the Preachers of the Lecture founded by the Honourable Mr. *Boyle*, but more eſpecially the learned Dr. *Bentley*, who, as he was the firſt, that enter'd the *Liſts*, ſo he deſervedly ſtands in the *Front* of thoſe ſtrenuous Defenders of the Chriſtian Cauſe, and gallant Combatants againſt *Atheiſm*, *Deiſm*, and *Judaiſm*; for hitherto *Mahometiſm* (tho' it deſerves it as much) has met with no Confutation.

† This is, in ſhort, the *Epicurean* Account of the *Original* of the World, which, as abſurd as it is, *Lucretius* has very elegantly dreſſed up, even as it appears in our *Tranſlation*:

Now will I ſing, how moving *Seeds* were hurl'd,
How toſs'd to *Order*, how they fram'd a World;
How Sun and Moon began; what ſteady *Force*
Mark'd out their Walk; what makes them keep their *Courſe*.
For ſure unthinking *Seeds* did ne'er diſpoſe
Themſelves by *Counſel*, nor their *Order* choſe;
Nor any *Compacts* made, how each ſhould move;
But from Eternal thro' the *Vacuum* ſtrove
By their own *Weight*, or by external *Blows*;
All *Motions* try'd to find the beſt of thoſe;
All Unions too, if, by their various Play,
They could compoſe new Beings any Way.
Thus long they *whirl'd*, moſt Sorts of *Motion* paſt,
Moſt Sorts of *Union* too, they join'd at laſt
In ſuch convenient *Order*; whence began
The *Sea*, the *Heav'n*, and *Earth*, and *Beaſts*, and *Man*.

CREECH Lib. 5.

of the World, and aſſum'd to themſelves the Character of deep *Reaſoners*; but the Apoſtle's Judgment of them is, that, (*a*) *profeſſing themſelves to be wiſe, they became Fools, and vain in their Imaginations.* For, we may appeal to the common Senſe of Mankind, whether any Thing can be more fooliſh and abſurd, than to impute an Effect to *Chance*, (*b*) (a mere *Word*, an empty *Sound*, that is nothing, and can do nothing) which carries, in the very Face of it, all the Signs and Characters of a wiſe Deſign; to think that a Company of ſenſeleſs Crums of Matter, without any Skill in the Application of their Force, without the Interpoſition of any intelligent Direction, ſhould *jumble* themſelves into this *terraqueous* Globe, and theſe beautiful celeſtial Spheres, and produce ſuch a vaſt Variety of Beings, as do every where ſtock and adorn them. This is ſuch a *Paradox*, as none, but an Underſtanding of a very odd and uncommon Make, can pretend to believe; (*c*) "for, ſure-"ly, it would be far leſs abſurd to imagine, "that the moſt curious Machine fram'd by "human Art, the moſt beautiful Edifice, "the moſt finiſh'd Picture, or the moſt "delightful muſical Harmony; that theſe, "any, or all of them, made themſelves "by a merely *caſual* Mixture of their Parts, "than that this ſtupendous and moſt arti-"ficial Fabrick of the Univerſe aroſe from "nothing, or from rude and indigeſted "Materials, in the Hand of blind and un-"deſigning *Chance*."

Some antient *Philoſophers Advancers of* Paradoxes.

PRIDE of Heart, a fond Conceit of their own Abilities, and an † Affectation of ſuperior Knowledge, enabling them to puzzle the plaineſt Truths, and to confound vulgar Underſtandings, have doubtleſs engaged many to contradict common and receiv'd Opinions, to advance *Paradoxes*, and thereupon to value themſelves for the Singularity of their Notions. The Philoſophers of old (thoſe eſpecially who were of the *atheiſtical* Strain) were Perſons of this Complexion. The Character, which *Tully* gives of them, is, (*d*) *That nothing was ſo abſurd, but one or other of them was known to aſſert it.* Thus we find (*e*) ſome diſputing againſt the Poſſibility of *Motion*, (*f*) others attempting to prove that Snow was *black*, and others maintaining that *contrary* Opinions might both be true; and therefore it is not much to be wonder'd at, that Men of this Temper, and Caſt of Mind ſhould reject *firſt* and ſelf-evident Principles, and run down the Belief of a God, merely to diſplay the Strength of their Parts, and to ſhew their great Talent at *Diſputation*.

Others falſely reputed Atheiſts.

SOME other Philoſophers, however, did not act in this frantick Manner. They ſaw that the Age, wherein they lived, was overrun with Idolatry; that (*g*) the Glory of God was *changed into the Image of corruptible Man, and of Birds, and four-footed Beaſts, and creeping Things*; and hereupon they ſet themſelves up for REFORMERS, and endeavoured to reclaim the People from the *dumb Idols*, to which they were ſo miſerably addicted, and from the wicked and abominable *Rites*, which generally attended their Worſhip: But becauſe in doing of this, they made uſe of Wit and Ridicule, as well as ſerious Arguments, to banter theſe vicious *Deities* out of the World, and to expoſe the Folly of their Adorers, for this Reaſon they incurr'd the Cenſure of being *Atheiſts*; (*h*) inſomuch that not only the ſuperſtitious Vulgar, (as we find at *Athens*) but even their grave Judges, the *Areopagites*, gave that odious Name to all thoſe, who ſhew'd the leaſt Contempt of their Idols, and the filthy and ridiculous Practices, which their lewd Poets had aſcrib'd to their Gods; and ſo *Socrates*, the moſt expreſs Aſſertor of a Deity, for this only Reaſon, becauſe he endeavoured (in the ſame Manner as did St. *Paul*) (*i*) *to turn his* Countrymen *from theſe Vanities, unto the living God, who made Heaven and Earth*, was condemn'd and puniſh'd as an *Atheiſt*.

Thoſe, that were ſo, no Standard *of human Nature.*

IT muſt not be denied, however, that, in all Ages, there have been ſome particular Perſons, who have baniſh'd from their Breaſts the Belief of a God: (*k*) For, as the Senſe of a Deity always includes his Authority over Men, his Inſpection into their Affairs, and their Accountableneſs to him for their Conduct, and is, therefore, attended with a ſtrong Suſpicion, that the Crimes, they are conſcious of, will meet with Diſ-

(*a*) Rom. i. 21, 22. (*b*) *Clarke*'s Ser. Vol. I. (*c*) *Abernethy*'s Ser. Vol. I.

† *Lactantius* (in his Diſcourſe *de Ira Dei*) tells us, that *Diagoras*, and *Theodorus*, two of the antient *Atheiſts*, denied a Deity, that they might gain the Glory of being the Authors of ſome new Opinion, contradictory to the common Notions of Mankind: And of the former of theſe *Sextus Empiricus* informs us, that, becauſe a certain perjur'd Perſon, who had wronged him, liv'd unpuniſh'd by the Gods, he was ſo enrag'd at it, that he undertook to maintain, there were no Gods at all. Vide *Harris*'s Ser. at *Boyle*'s Lect.

(*d*) De Nat. Deo. Lib. 3. (*e*) viz. *Zeno.* (*f*) viz. *Anaxagoras.* (*g*) Rom. i. 23. (*h*) *Butler*'s Ser. at *Boyle*'s Lect. (*i*) Acts xiv. 15. (*k*) *Abernethy*'s Ser. Vol I.

pleaſure, and a ſevere Puniſhment from him; this fills their Thoughts with dreadful Apprehenſions of his Being; tempts them, by all Means, to get rid of theſe troubleſome Gueſts; and ſo, having tried to lull themſelves into an Opinion quite agreeable to their Wiſhes, they betake themſelves to *Infidelity*, (*a*) as an *Opiate* to compoſe the Diſorder of their Minds, and to gain, as it were, an *Inſenſibility* in Sinning. But can we look upon theſe diſſolute Perſons, immers'd in Senſuality, and ſtupified in their Judgments, as any true Standards of human Nature? (*b*) Becauſe ſome Men are born blind, or have loſt their Sight, ſhall we therefore infer, that there is no ſuch Thing in the World, as Light or Colours? And yet, with as good Reaſon may we conclude, that there is no ſuch Thing as a ſupreme Being, becauſe (*c*) *the Ungodly is ſo proud, that he careth not for God, neither is God in all his Thoughts.*

The Account concerning barbarous *Nations miſtaken.*

PARTICULAR Exceptions will not diſannul the Truth of a *general* Maxim: And, therefore, tho' we may admit of ſome few Unbelievers in this Reſpect, yet we can hardly conceive it poſſible to produce *whole Nations* of them. In the moſt antient Times, it is certain there were none ſuch. (*d*) *Epicurus* himſelf is forc'd to acknowledge, that the Notion of a Deity was a common *Prolepſis*, a Principle either innate, or very early entertain'd. *Homer* ſpeaks every where of the Gods, as of Beings univerſally known and believ'd; and not only *Moſes*, but all other Law-givers, who have publiſh'd Rules for religious Obſervances, take for granted the Exiſtence of a Deity, without ever attempting to prove it. And, therefore, we are apt to ſuſpect, that the Travellers who tell us of whole Countries of *Atheiſts*, have either been *prejudic'd* againſt theſe People, or not ſufficiently acquainted with the Cuſtoms; becauſe, upon a farther Examination, it does appear, that they all own one God, or ſupreme good Being, tho' they have different * Notions of his Perſon and Perfections, and are far from being uniform in their Manner of worſhipping him. † The *Hottentots*, for Inſtance, are as rude and ſavage a People, as any upon the Globe. Except in their outward Form, they are degenerated almoſt into Brutes, and (*e*) *have ſurviv'd the common Inſtincts of Humanity*; and yet, according to the Relation of thoſe, that have liv'd among them, they have ſome Shew of religious Rejoicings at the new and full Moon; pray ſometimes to a Being, that dwells above; and offer Sacrifices of Milk, and the beſt Things they have, with Eyes lift up to Heaven; which is a ſufficient Indication, that their Minds are not ſo far blinded, as not to diſcern the Evidences of a God.

Wicked Men not without the Notion of a God.

'TIS a melancholy Conſideration indeed, when Men (*f*) *hold this Truth in Unrighteouſneſs*, and (*g*) *profeſs to know God, when in Works they deny him*: But then we may obſerve, that the Belief of a Deity, and a Behaviour comporting therewith, are two different Things, and not inſeparable from each other. Men may, by the Violence of their carnal Luſts, or by the Perverſeneſs of their deprav'd Wills, be hurried on to the Commiſſion of thoſe Things, which they certainly believe (but will not duly conſider) are very hurtful and pernicious to them: But we cannot from thence infer, that, even at that Time, they have no Perception of God, any more, (*h*) than that Thieves and Murtherers do not believe that there are *Judges* and *Laws* to puniſh them, becauſe they boldly venture to thieve and kill. The only Inference that we can properly make, is this——That *reaſonable* Men may do

(*a*) *Harris*'s Ser. at *Boyle*'s Lect. (*b*) *Wilkins*'s Nat. Relig. (*c*) Pſal. x. 4. (*d*) *Butler*'s Ser. at *Boyle*'s Lect.

* Thus, among the *Northern Americans*, ſome acknowledge the *Sun* for their God; others will have a Spirit, that commands the *Air*; and others look upon the *Sky* as a Kind of Divinity. They admit of ſome Sort of *Genius* or Spirit in all Things; talk much of the *Maſter of Life*, as they call him; believe that there are Spirits in the Air, who foretel Futurities, and cure Diſeaſes; and they mention one *Genius*, whom they name *Micabotbe*, that cover'd the whole Earth with Water, *&c.* which ſeems to have Analogy with the Univerſal Flood. *Edwards*'s Body of Chr. Rel. Vol. I.

† To this Purpoſe, the Authors who have treated of theſe People, do inform us, that, upon Enquiry, it was found, they really did believe in a God, who, as they affirm'd, made Heaven and Earth, the Sea and every living Thing in them; who cauſed it to thunder and rain, and provided them with Nouriſhment, and Skins of Beaſts for their Apparel: And, as the *Chief* of an *Hottentot* Nation, *ſay they*, preſides over the *Captains* of their *Kraals*, (*i. e.* a Multitude of Huts plac'd together for the People to dwell in) ſo they call God the great and *ſupreme Captain*: Nay, in their Language, they give him the Name of *Gounja Gounja*, or *Gounja Tieqvoa*, *i. e.* the *God of all Gods*, whom they ſuppoſe to be the *Arbiter* of the World, endow'd with unſearchable Attributes and Perfections, and that through his Omnipotence all Things *live, and move, and have their Being*; tho' we do not find that they had any *inſtituted* Form of Worſhip directly regarding this ſupreme God. Vide the preſent State of the *Cape of Good Hope*.

(*e*) *Overton*'s Voyage to Surat. (*f*) Rom. i. 18. (*g*) Tit. i. 16. (*h*) *Butler*'s Ser. at *Boyle*'s Lect.

do *unreaſonable* Things: That Men, who are neither *Ideots*, nor diſtracted, may act very fooliſhly and madly; neglect their own apparent Intereſt, and knowingly ruin their immortal Souls. But then we may farther obſerve, that ſince the Practice of theſe Men makes it ſo *eligible* to them, *there ſhould be no God*, 'tis a Sign that the *Light* ſtrikes ſtrong upon them, even tho' they ſtrive to ſhut it out, and that the Notion is ſo congenial to them, that frequently it will be returning, do they what they will to prevent it.

And the Upbraidings of Conſcience.

AND, in like manner, (*a*) tho' the Charms and Allurements of Pleaſure, and the Noiſe and Hurry of worldly Buſineſs, may drown the Voice of *Conſcience*; falſe Hopes, and groundleſs Perſuaſions may, in ſome meaſure, ſilence it; and a long Cuſtom of enormous Wickedneſs ſtupify it for a Time, and make it inſenſible; yet God generally takes Occaſion to call upon it, and awaken it, and then it is obſerv'd, that thoſe Perſons, who, in their Proſperity, ſtrive moſt to ſtifle the Thoughts of a ſupreme Being, when they fall into any Difficulties, or chance to be ſurpriz'd with Solitude or Sickneſs, are the moſt abject, timorous, and deſponding Wretches in the World: For ſo we are told of *Epicurus*, (*b*) that when he came to die, he quak'd and trembled at the Apprehenſion of thoſe Things, which before he had declar'd were not to be fear'd at all, *Death*, and a *Deity*. Thus it is, and thus it will ever be with Men of corrupt Principles, and flagitious Practices; at one Time or other, the Upbraidings of Conſcience will fill them with Horror, and (*c*) *the Terrors of God will ſet themſelves in Array againſt them*; ſo that, (*d*) *when they ſhall ſay, Peace and Safety, then ſudden Deſtruction cometh upon them, as Travail upon a Woman with Child, and they ſhall not eſcape.*

The Notion of a God not occaſioned by Fear.

AND now what ſhall we ſay to this? Shall we impute this Notion of a Deity to *Fear*, and an anxious Jealouſy of what may befal us? We acknowledge, indeed, that (*e*) it is natural for our Minds to be poſſeſs'd with dreadful Apprehenſions of ſuch Things, as are able to do us hurt. We find in ourſelves an innate Fear of offending God, and think it ſuitable to his Juſtice to puniſh thoſe, who perſiſt obſtinately in their Rebellion againſt him; but then we know very well, that the Notion, we have of a Deity, does not ariſe from this *Fear*, but rather that this Fear is occaſioned by *it*; or, in other Words, that it is the natural *Effect* and *Conſequence* of our Belief and Knowledge of a God, but cannot be the *Cauſe* and *Original* of it; becauſe, as the Notion of a Deity comprehends in it *Goodneſs* and *Mercy*, as well as *Awefulneſs* and *Juſtice*, we cannot conceive how *Fear* alone ſhould diſpoſe a Man to fancy a Being, that is infinitely good and merciful.

(*f*) WERE *Fear* to make a God, it would compoſe him of nothing, but dark and terrible Ideas; would repreſent him as an angry and vindictive Being, a malicious and bloody Deity, who took delight in nothing, but in exerciſing his Cruelty, and tyrannical Power upon Mankind. But now, inſtead of this, we find a quite different Notion of him in the World, *viz.* that he is a loving, kind, and gracious Being, *whoſe Mercies are over all his Works*; ready to hear and help us in all our Diſtreſſes, to pity our Infirmities, to pardon our Tranſgreſſions, to crown us with his Favours, and to provide amply both for our temporal and eternal Happineſs. This is the true Notion of a God; and were *Fear* the ſole Riſe of this, it would neceſſarily follow, that where this Notion is moſt ſtrong and prevalent, there the greateſt Diſtruſt, Suſpicion, and Anxiety would be found: Whereas it is manifeſt to all the World, that he, who ſtedfaſtly believes in God, is beſt ſecured againſt theſe uneaſy Affections; and, while the Infidel, in his Troubles, finds *his Spirit* unable *to ſuſtain his Infirmity*, and can meet with nothing from *without*, either to ſupport or comfort him; this Man has always at Hand an Almighty Protector and Deliverer, and can therefore with Aſſurance ſay, (*g*) *the Lord is my Light, and my Salvation, whom then ſhall I fear; the Lord is the Strength of my Life, of whom ſhall I be afraid?*

Nor Ignorance.

SHALL we impute this Notion of a God to Men's *Ignorance* of the Powers of *natural Cauſes*, which might effect the Formation of the World without the Intervention of a ſuperior Being? Nay, but if ye will give yourſelves the Trouble of examining ſome of theſe eminent *World-makers*, and (*b*) aſk one Sort of them, how Things came to be as they are, ſo various, ſo uniform, ſo beautiful, ſo conſtant and regular in their Motions?

(*a*) *Edwards*'s Body of Ch. Rel. Vol. I.
(*b*) *Butler*'s Ser. at *Boyle*'s Lect.
(*b*) *Tully* De Nat. Deo. Quæ. 1.
(*c*) Job vi. 4.
(*d*) 1 Theſſ. v. 3.
(*e*) *Wilkins*'s Nat. Relig.
(*f*) *Harris*'s Ser. at *Boyle*'s Lect.
(*g*) Pſal. xxvii. 1.

tions? they will only tell you, that *it always was ſo*; which is, in effect, to confeſs their Ignorance, and frankly to own, *they know nothing of the Matter*. Another will tell you, "that Things came in the "State, we ſee them in, by the Efficacy of "*Cauſes*, void of Intelligence, and acting "*neceſſarily*;" which is as much as to ſay, *Things are as they are, becauſe they could be no otherwiſe:* And a third will tell you, that, "once upon a Time, an innumerable "Company of Atoms, after long rambling "about in an infinite Space, jump'd happily, at laſt, into this Syſtem of the "World, and fix'd themſelves in the comely Order wherein they now continue." This is all they have to tell you, and what is all this, but *black Fraud, and endleſs Error, and imperfect Imagination, and incomprehenſible Ignorance*, as (*a*) one of the Antients, (in his Irriſion of Men of the like Complexion) terms it.

A modeſt Enquiry into the *Properties* of Matter, the *Laws* of Motion, and other natural Cauſes, is an Undertaking of great Uſe, and highly conducive to our Creator's Glory; but thoſe Philoſophers (as they call themſelves) who, after all their Diſquiſitions, can produce no better Materials than theſe, and, according to their wonted Modeſty, think to fob us off with this vile *Traſh*, inſtead of meriting Eſteem, are to be look'd upon as Creatures, that, of all Men, deſerve moſt to be laugh'd at; becauſe (*b*) we are aſſur'd, that a Multitude of thoſe, who have conſider'd all the Diſcoveries of Philoſophy, and ſtudiouſly enquired into the Nature and Cauſes of Things, the more they have ſearch'd, and the more they have diſcover'd, the more they have been convinc'd of the Neceſſity of recurring to the *firſt Cauſe*, the All-wiſe and Almighty Maker of Heaven and Earth.

Nor State Policy.

SHALL we impute this Notion of a God to the cunning Contrivance of ſome great Politicians? But then (upon the Suppoſition that there was no Notion of this kind before in the World) it is impoſſible to imagine, how any one could ever have fram'd ſuch a Conception to himſelf. (*c*) The Mind of Man cannot invent any new *ſimple* Idea, or Cogitation. It cannot make a *poſitive* Conception of that, which is really nothing: And, therefore, if God, at this Time, had been an abſolute *Non-entity*, no Man could ever have had an Idea of him, becauſe (what Way ſoever we may come by our Ideas) what is abſolutely *nothing*, can never produce *any* in us; can never make any Impreſſion on our *Senſes*, or Excitement on our *Minds*. But admit it were poſſible for a Set of crafty Men to raiſe ſuch a Notion out of nothing; yet ſtill we want to be inform'd, by what *Stratagem* they were able to *introduce* it into the World, and impoſe it upon ſo many States and Kingdoms, without any Shew of Oppoſition? By what Device they could gain it a free *Paſſport*, and make it deſcend to future Generations, without any Search, or Examination? By what Means they could propagate it among the Inhabitants of the *Iſlands*, remote from the *Continent*, and ſuch Parts of the World, as were not then found out? And how it came to paſs, that, through all ſucceeding Ages, the Wit of Man was never able to diſcover the Impoſture?

THE prevailing Notion of a God is, *that* of an Almighty Ruler, and ſupreme Lawgiver, to whom the greateſt Potentate, as well as the meaneſt Peaſant, is ſubject, and accountable; but, had this been the Invention of *Stateſmen*, they would have given it another Turn, one would think, and made it more ſubſervient to their particular Intereſt and Security; would have appropriated all the *Comforts*, and ſcreen'd themſelves from all the *Terrors* of it; but (*d*) ſince the Hiſtories of all Ages inform us, that Princes, and other great Men, who have nothing to fear from human Power, are not more ſecure from the Dread of God, the Troubles of Conſcience, and the Apprehenſions of a future Judgment, than other Men, we may ſafely conclude, that this Notion of a God was no *State-Juggle*, to cozen the People into Obedience, but a common Sentiment impreſs'd upon the Minds of all, wherein (*e*) thoſe *of the Iſlands and of the Continent, the* Greek *and* Barbarian, the King and the Subject, the Learned and Ignorant, the *Wiſe and Unwiſe* agree. (*f*) *Great and marvellous are thy Works, O Lord God Almighty, juſt and true are thy Ways, thou King of Saints!*

(*a*) *Hermias.* (*b*) *Butler's* Ser. at *Boyle's* Lect. (*c*) *Harris's* Ser. at *Boyle's* Lect. (*d*) *Tillotſon's* Ser. Vol. I. (*e*) *Maximus Tyrius* in Diſ. I. (*f*) Rev. xv. 3.

The

The DISSERTATION.

Of the Folly of ATHEISM.

An Atheiſt, *what.*

BY an *Atheiſt* is commonly meant a Perſon, who will own no *Being* under the Name and Title of God; who denies the *Creation* and *Conſervation* of the World to be the Work and Contrivance of a wiſe intelligent Agent; who rejects a Divine *Providence* directing the Courſe of all Things, and ſuperintending the Affairs of Mankind; who diſcards the Thoughts of a *Future State*, and all Expectations of Rewards and Puniſhments according to Men's Behaviour; and who renounces all *Obligations* of Duty to any ſuperior Being, and thereupon ſays with himſelf, (*a*) *what is the Almighty, that we ſhould ſerve him? or what Profit have we, if we pray unto him?*

His Folly *ſhewn, from the* Weakneſs *of his Arguments.*

THIS, you will ſay, is a *bold* Man, that dares thus fly in the Face of Heaven, and offer ſuch Indignities to the Divine Majeſty, even at the Hazard of being undone for ever, in caſe he ſhould be miſtaken; and nothing leſs than the moſt clear and convincing Demonſtrations, one would think, can be a ſufficient Ground for ſuch egregious Confidence: But alas! where ſhall the Infidel find any ſuch Arguments in Confirmation of his Scheme? His Buſineſs is to prove a *pure Negative*, viz. *that there is no God*; and this, unleſs the Exiſtence of the Thing, which he denies, implies a plain *Contradiction*, (as cannot be ſaid in the Caſe of God) every *Logician* will tell him, is a Thing impoſſible. The utmoſt therefore, that the moſt learned and laborious Unbeliever could ever pretend to, was to advance *Atheiſm* into a grand *perhaps*, and, by endeavouring to demonſtrate, how Things might poſſibly be without a God, from thence to infer, that *poſſibly* there is none. But would any Man in his Wits found his Faith upon a mere *Poſſibility*, when it will be as much as his Soul is worth, if he happens to miſcarry. "It is poſſible (as "(*b*) one expreſſes it) that, ſhould he throw "himſelf from the Top of an high Steeple, "the Air between may be ſo condens'd, "as to bear him up, and preſerve him from "being daſh'd in Pieces by the Fall; but "would not you think the Man ſtark mad, "that ſhould venture his Neck upon that "Poſſibility? And yet it is a far more deſ-"perate Riſque, that the Atheiſt makes, "in thus expoſing his Soul to everlaſting "Deſtruction, upon a bare Poſſibility, that "there may be no God to deſtroy him."

The Abſurdity *of his Principles.*

WHAT is it then makes him thus daring and adventurous? *To ſet himſelf above the Impreſſion of vulgar Errors, and that fond Credulity, which obſtructs the Operations of free Thinking.* Let us then take a View of ſome of his Principles and Poſitions, (which we may call the *Articles* of his Faith) in order to ſee, whether, in this Reſpect, he has attained his End, or not.

HE believes that there is *no God*, and that, in this Matter, all Mankind have been ſadly miſtaken, except himſelf and a few more. But is not his very Suſpicion, that the Belief of a God was a *politick* Contrivance of ſome cunning Man, to keep others in Obedience, a ſufficient Conceſſion, that, in his Opinion, it greatly conduces to the Support of *civil* Government and good Order in the World, and that if it is not, 'tis a pity, at leaſt, it ſhould not be true?

HE believes that there is no *Providence* to direct the Courſe of the Univerſe, but that all Things are guided either by a blind *Neceſſity* or *Chance*: But as well might he fancy, that a Ship, launch'd at *Deptford*, without any Rudder or Compaſs, without any Mariner to ſteer, or any Sailor to work it, might find out its Way to the *Eaſt-Indies*; there deliver its *Cargo*, freight itſelf again, and ſo return in Safety to its native Port; as that the exact Revolutions of the Heavens and the Earth, and the conſtant Viciſſitudes of Times and Seaſons ſhould be daily preſerved and continued, without the Superintendency of ſome *intelligent* Mind.

HE ſometimes believes that the World is *eternal*, without Beginning, and without End: But, as he is ſenſible, that himſelf muſt die, (*c*) *his Body be turn'd into Aſhes*, and *his Soul vaniſh* (as he terms it) *into the ſoft Air*; is it not more rational to infer, (as

(*a*) Job xxi. 15. (*b*) *Scot*'s Chriſt. Life, Part II. ch. 3. (*c*) Wiſdom ii. 3.

we find * his favourite Poet does) that *the World certainly had a Beginning, otherwiſe, thoſe Things, which are in their own Nature corruptible, had never been able, from all Eternity, to have held out againſt ſuch violent Shocks and Aſſaults, as, in an infinite Duration of Time, muſt have happened.*

He believes, at other Times, that the World was made by a *fortuitous* Concourſe of ſeveral Kinds of little Particles of Matter: But as well might he ſuppoſe (*a*) that twenty Thouſand blind Men, ſent out from different Parts of *England*, ſhould (after ſome Time of wandering about) all meet together upon *Salisbury Plains*, and there fall into *Rank* and *File*, in the Form of a regular Army; as that an innumerable Multitude of ſenſeleſs *Atoms*, without any ſuperior Hand to conduct them, ſhould ever *rendezvous* themſelves into a World.

He believes that Mankind at firſt had no *Creator*, no Cauſe of their Exiſtence, but ſprang out of the Earth like *Muſhrooms:* But is it not a more comfortable Thing (*b*) to think well of ourſelves, and to have an high Value and Conceit of the Dignity of our nature, and the noble Origination of our Race, than to imagine that Men proceeded (as *Vermin* are commonly thought to do) by the ſole Influence of the Sun, out of Dirt and Putrefaction?

He believes that our *Souls* are made of nothing, but ſome Parts of Matter, refin'd and modified in a peculiar Manner: But may not he with as good Reaſon (*c*) aſſent to the Truth of all the Fictions of *Æſop*'s Fables? For " is it not every whit as likely, " that *Cocks* and *Bulls* might diſcourſe, and " *Hinds* and *Panthers* hold Conferences " about Religion, as that *Atoms* can do ſo? " that *Atoms* can invent *Arts* and *Sciences*, " can inſtitute *Society* and *Government*, can " make *Leagues* and *Confederacies*, deviſe " Methods of *Peace*, and Stratagems of " *War?*"

He believes that when once Men *die* there is an utter End and Extinction of their Being for ever: But, beſides the Deſire of *Immortality*, which is implanted in our Souls, and makes the Thoughts of *Annihilation* intolerable, he wilfully forgets that *what he ſoweth, is not quickened except it die*, (*d*) and that every Thing renew'd, and reviv'd at the Coming of the Spring, puts this home Queſtion to him, (*e*) *Why ſhould it be thought a Thing incredible with you, that God ſhould raiſe the Dead?*

He believes, laſtly, no *future Life*, nor any State of Rewards and Puniſhments, according to our Behaviour here: But is it not more reaſonable to conclude, that the natural *Preſages* of Conſcience will, at one Time or other, be verified; the *Inequalities*, that we now ſee in this World, nicely adjuſted; and a viſible Diſcrimination made *between the Righteous and the Wicked, between him that ſerved God, and him that ſerved him not?* (*f*)

These are ſome of the ſtrange Doctrines, and groundleſs Aſſertions, which the *Atheiſt* is not aſham'd to maintain. Let us now in the next Place, look into his *moral* Character and Conduct, and ſee, if in that Regard too, he be not all of a Piece.

His Liableneſs to all Manner of Sin.

That there is, in Reality, † no ſuch Thing, as *moral* Good or Evil, but that all Actions are, in their own Nature, *indifferent*, 'till they be declared otherwiſe by the Voice of the *Legiſlature*, is the *Atheiſt*'s firm Perſuaſion; and, as the Obligation to human Laws, in his Opinion, proceeds only from *Fear of Puniſhment*, (if he will be true to his Principles) he muſt always purſue his *prevailing Paſſion* by all poſſible Means, and ſtick at the *Perpetration* of no Villainy or Immorality (ſo long as he can commit it *ſecretly*, and *ſecurely*) that he thinks conducive to his *private* Happineſs or Advantage. To be juſt and honeſt in his Dealings, or loving and merciful, helpful and

* The Words of *Lucretius*, as our Tranſlator has given them, are:

——— For, what can fail
And waſte, o'er what the Strokes of Fate prevail,
Muſt be unable to endure the Rage
Of infinite paſt Time, and Power of Age.

Creech Lib. 5.

(*a*) *Tillotſon*'s Ser. Vol. I. (*b*) *Bentley*'s Ser. at *Boyle*'s Lect. (*c*) *Bentley* ibid. (*d*) 1 Cor. xv. 36. (*e*) Acts xxvi. 8. (*f*) Mal. iii. 18.

† Mr. *Hobbes* expreſly maintains, that *there is nothing ſimply or abſolutely good or evil, nor any common Rule about them to be taken from the Objects themſelves, but only from the Perſon, who calleth that* good, *which he likes or deſires, and that* evil, *which he hates*, &c. Leviath. p. 20. *Nothing*, ſays he, *is in its own Nature juſt or unjuſt, becauſe naturally there is no Property, but every one hath a Right to every Thing*, Ibid. p. 63, 74. and, in another Place, he tells us, that *Good and Evil are only Names, that ſignify our Appetites and Averſions, which, in different Tempers, Cuſtoms, and Doctrines of Men, are different.* Ibid. p. 79. To the ſame Purpoſe we find *Blunt*, in his *Oracles of* Reaſon, p. 117. and *Spinoſa*, in his *poſthumous* Works, p. 89. fully declaring themſelves. *Harris*'s Ser. at *Boyle*'s Lect.

and beneficial to his Neighbours, can be no Concern of his, any farther than as it promotes his *ſecular* Intereſt; but he may murder, rob, or oppreſs, for the Gratification of his Malice or Extravagance, his revengeful or Tyrannical Temper, without any Uneaſineſs or Remorſe, if he be but ſo lucky, as to eſcape the Hands of publick Juſtice. (a) *Come with us* (ſays the Infidel of this Complexion to his Aſſociate) *let us lay wait for Blood; let us lurk privily for the Innocent without a Cauſe; let us ſwallow them up alive, as the Grave, and whole, as thoſe, that go down into the Pit; we ſhall find all precious Subſtance, we ſhall fill our Houſes with Spoils*; and, when he hath committed all this, if he can but conceal himſelf from the Inſpection of Men, (b) *He hath ſaid in his Heart, Tuſh! God hath forgotten, he hideth away his Face, and will never ſee it.*

And his Incorrigibleneſs *in it.*

WHEN once a Man has fix'd himſelf in this Perſuaſion, 'tis hard to conceive, what ſhould reſtrain him from the moſt flagitious Practices, and from *working all Uncleanneſs with Greedineſs, having his Underſtanding darken'd, and being alienated from the Life of God through the Ignorance that is in him, becauſe of the Blindneſs of his Heart.* All the Addreſſes made to the Reaſon of ſuch a Man will be in vain, becauſe *his Underſtanding is darken'd:* All Diſcourſe to him upon the Principles of Religion will be foreign and inſignificant, becauſe *he is alienated from the Life of God:* All Attempts on his Affections will fail, becauſe *his Heart being harden'd,* is incapable of any Impreſſions; and, as for the * *Principle of Honour,* which he talks ſo much of, and pretends to govern himſelf by, it is but a *ſwelling* Word, which will prove a weak Obſtruction, even to baſe and inglorious Actions, when a fair Proſpect of Intereſt, the Importunity of his eager Luſts, and the Hopes of eſcaping with Impunity, prompt and goad him on.

His Character both in private and publick Life.

THE Truth is, (c) he, that is a thorough-pac'd *Atheiſt*, looks upon the Notions of Honour and Reputation as mere *Cyphers*, when applied to any Thing but *Cunning*, and *Art* in the managing and advancing a Man's own Intereſt: He renounces the Obligations of Generoſity, Friendſhip, and Gratitude, when they do not ſerve to promote the Attainment of what appears more agreeable to him: He lays aſide all Sentiments of Tenderneſs, Pity, and Compaſſion, when the Miſeries of others can procure him what he eſteems a greater Happineſs, than gratifying theſe fooliſh *Propenſions* of Nature: He looks upon Government, Right, and Property, with all the pretended Grounds and Foundations of them, as uſeleſs and inſignificant Inventions, that make no real Diſtinction in Men or Things: He never prefers the *publick* Good of a City, Nation, or Empire, to his own *private* Satisfaction, (tho' that Satisfaction be but momentary) if he cannot be ſo happy without it; and, as he is ſenſible, that his *Life* is the utmoſt *Compaſs* and Extent of his Happineſs, he confines all his Cares and Endeavours, all his Hopes and Deſires, within the ſame Bounds; has no Regard to *Memory* or *Poſterity*; no Concern, if the whole Race of Mankind were to end with him; nor will he deny himſelf any preſent Gratification, even tho' it were to procure the greateſt Advantages imaginable to ſucceeding Generations.

THIS ſhort *Sketch* of the Character of an *Atheiſt* is enough to convince us, that the Man, who, upon a full Conviction of Mind, denies

(a) Prov. i. 11. (b) Pſ. x. 12.

* This *Principle of Honour*, which *Infidels* would ſet up in the Place of *Conſcience* and Religion, is the verieſt Cheat in Nature: It is nothing but a mere deluſive *Name*, to gull the World into a Belief, that they have ſome kind of *Directory*, which keeps them from doing an *ill Thing*, to act and proceed by; whereas the *Atheiſt* can have no Principle at all, but that ſordid one of *Self-Love*, which will ſtill carry him to the perpetrating of any Thing indifferently, according as it beſt conduces to his preſent Advantage, and is conſiſtent with his Safety; ſo that this boaſted *Honour*, and Greatneſs of Mind, amount, at laſt, to no more than this, ——that he will forbear doing any *ill Thing*, when he thinks it will prove *ill to himſelf.* He will be juſt, honeſt, and ſincere, when *he does not dare* to be otherwiſe, for Fear of the Law, Shame, or Ignominy: For all Men of Atheiſtical Principles would be *Knaves* and *Villains*, if they durſt, and could do it *ſecretly*, and *ſecurely*. Such a Man ('tis likely) ſhall return you a Bag of Money, or a rich Jewel you have depoſed in his Hands; but why is it? It is becauſe he dares not keep it, and deny it: It is great Odds, but that he is diſcover'd, and expos'd by this Means; and, beſides, it is *unfaſhionable* and *ungenteel* to cheat in ſuch Caſes: But to *impoveriſh* a Family by Extravagance and Debauchery; to *defraud* Creditors of their juſt Debts, or Servants of their Wages; to *cheat* at Play, or *violate* a Neighbour's Bed; theſe, though every whit as criminal, are committed with little or no Remorſe, becauſe they are common and uſual, and (tho' they juſtly deſerve it) are not attended with ſuch *Scandal* and Infamy, as other Vices are: From whence it appears, that this pretended Principle of Honour in an *Atheiſt*, or a wicked Man, is a very *partial* and *changeable* Thing, and vaſtly different from that true Honour, and Bravery of Mind, that is founded on the Eternal *Baſis* of Conſcience and Religion. *Harris*'s Ser. at *Boyle*'s Lect.

(c) *Gaſtrel*'s Ser. at *Boyle*'s Lect.

denies the Being of a God, if he acts according to this Perſuaſion, can neither be a good *Liver*, nor a good *Penitent*; a good *Friend*, nor a good *Neighbour*; a good *Ruler*, nor a good *Subject*, or good Commonwealth's Man. His Principles indeed make him an Enemy to all Mankind; and if we enquire a little farther, we ſhall find, that, in the main, he is the greateſt Enemy to himſelf.

His Notions uncomfortable.

A SMALL Inſpection into human Life will inform us, (*a*) that we are continually ſurrounded with *Evils*, which, of ourſelves, we cannot ſurmount; with *Wants*, which we are not able to ſupply; with *Infirmities*, which we cannot remove, and with *Dangers*, which we can no Way eſcape: That our *Hopes* are bigger than our Enjoyments; our *Enjoyments* not for a Moment ſecure; and our *Expectations* not in our Power to accompliſh: That we are apt to grieve for what we cannot help; deſire earneſtly what we are not likely to obtain; and be diſquieted with the Fears of what we cannot prevent. In all which Caſes there is no ſubſtantial Comfort, but in the Belief of a God, and in the ſingular Satisfaction of having him for a Friend, (*b*) *who is the Hope of all the Ends of the Earth, and of them that remain in the broad Sea.*

And injurious to himſelf and others.

(*c*) WERE God indeed an envious, malicious, and tyrannical Being, that repin'd at the Happineſs of his Creatures, or took all Opportunities to oppreſs or deſtroy them; there might be ſome Reaſon then, for endeavouring to clear our Minds of the Thoughts and Apprehenſions of him: But to imagine, that it is an Advantage to us to believe, that there is no ſuch *Being* in the World, as a good and gracious God, who, out of the immenſe Benignity of his Nature, eſpouſes our Intereſt, and takes Care of our Happineſs; who underſtands our Wants, and compaſſionates our Sufferings, and is both able and willing to relieve us; to refreſh us in the Multitude of our Sorrows, and (*d*) *to give us Songs in the Night* of our Afflictions: To imagine, I ſay, that it is our Advantage to ſhake off the Belief of ſuch a bleſſed Being, is the ſame Height of Folly and Madneſs, (*e*) as it would be, to deſire that the Sun ſhould be pull'd down from the Firmament, and all the Lights of Heaven extinguiſh'd, in order to make this ſublunary World a more commodious Place for Man's Habitation.

His Life uneaſy and riotous.

(*f*) *DELIGHT thou in the Lord, and he ſhall give thee thine Heart's Deſire; commit thy Way unto the Lord, and put thy Truſt in him, and he ſhall bring it to paſs: He ſhall make thy Righteouſneſs as clear as the Light, and thy juſt Dealings as the Noon-day.* Here is the religious Man's Comfort and Conſolation in all his Wants and Neceſſities, in all his Difficulties and Diſtreſſes, in all the Calumnies and ill Uſage, that he meets with from others. But now, the Man, that has baniſh'd the Thoughts of God from his Breaſt, is deſtitute of all this. In his *Proſperity* he has no Self-Enjoyment, but is anxious and uneaſy, peeviſh and fretful, and ſuſpicious of the worſt; and in his *Adverſity* he has no Friend to flee to. All his Strength is in himſelf: He ſtands alone in all the Shocks of this uncertain Life, and ſo, in any great Affliction, is cruſh'd by the Weight of it. What Felicity he expects lies only in this World, and therefore he loves to indulge. (*g*) *He lies upon Beds of Ivory*, (as the Prophet deſcribes him) *and ſtretcheth himſelf upon his Couches: He eats the Lambs out of the Flocks, and the Calves out of the midſt of the Stall: He drinks Wine in Bowls, and anoints himſelf with the chief Ointments: He chants to the Sound of the Viol, and invents to himſelf Inſtruments of Muſick*, (*b*) and with Noiſe, and Laughter, and every Thing that is loud, he ſtifles the Remonſtrances of Reaſon, and the Murmurs of Conſcience, as Drum and Trumpet cover the Cries of Battle.

His Death impenitent, and his latter End terrible.

THUS (*i*) *in Rioting and Drunkenneſs, in Chambering and Wantonneſs*, in the Purſuit of his Luſts, in the Hurry of Buſineſs, or in a *Round* of idle Diverſions and Amuſements, his Days are conſum'd, and his Strength worn away in the Drudgery of Vice; 'till at length he comes to his Bed of Languiſhing, and then he begins to reflect on what he has done: For, being now ſeparated from his Companions in Sin and Folly, and from all his worldly Affairs and Enjoyments, the Thoughts of a God, of his great Creator, and righteous Judge break in upon him, and the Terrors of an Infinite Wrath to come make him ſad. Fain would he repent, if he could; but the Day of Grace

(*a*) *Tillotſon*'s and *Clarke*'s Ser. (*b*) Pſ. lxv. 5. (*c*) *Scot*'s Ch. Life, Part II. ch. 3. (*d*) Job xxxv. 10.
(*e*) *Scot*'s Ch. Life, Part II. ch. 3. (*f*) Pſ. xxxvii. 4, &c. (*g*) Amos vi. 4, &c. (*h*) *Young*'s Ser. Vol. I.
(*i*) Rom. xii. 13.

Grace is gone, and the Bowels of divine Compaſſion ſhut up, inſomuch, that if he chance at any Time to cry unto God to have Mercy upon him, he preſently hears this Anſwer return'd, (*a*) *Becauſe when I called, thou refuſedſt, when I ſtretched out my Hand, thou regardeſt not, but did ſet at naught my Counſel, and would have none of my Reproof; I alſo will laugh at thy Calamity, and will mock when thy Fear cometh, when thy Fear cometh as Deſolation, and thy Deſtruction cometh as a Whirlwind.* Thus the Man goes off into the other World with Horror, and Confuſion, and Amazement of Mind; but "there (*b*) his Miſeries rectify his No-"tions: He believes and trembles: He ſees "God again in the Terror of his Judge-"ments, and is convinc'd, by an eternal "Dying, that the Soul is ſubject to no "other Death. He now lies ſcourg'd with "paſt Enjoyments, and terrified with his "preſent Paſſions: His Wit and Parts groan "under the Conviction of Folly, and his "Shame and Anguiſh are conſummated by "Deſpair."

THUS you ſee that (*c*) the *Atheiſt*, by believing that there is no God, and acting accordingly, runs the moſt deſperate Hazard in the World. For, beſides that he throws away the main Support and Comfort of his Life, lays himſelf open to all Contingencies, and reſigns up the Satisfaction of a good Conſcience, together with the Hope of a bleſſed Futurity, and all the innumerable Joys, that it abounds with; beſides all this, I ſay, he ventures to be eternally wretched and miſerable in the World to come, and expoſes himſelf, naked and defenceleſs, to the unquenchable Wrath of God; in exchange for all which, he has no other preſent Compenſation, but the Pleaſures of a *riotous* and *tumultuary* Life, which do always die away in the Enjoyment, and are generally daſh'd and imbitter'd with very ſad and uncomfortable Circumſtances.

The Cauſes of Atheiſm

WHAT then, in the Name of Wonder, ſhould bewitch Men into an Opinion ſo ſenſeleſs and abſurd in itſelf, ſo contrary to the preſent Intereſt and Happineſs of Mankind, and, in the Event, ſo infinitely hazardous, and deſtructive to the Perſon, that eſpouſes it?

Vice and Immorality.

THE *Pſalmiſt*, in a great meaſure, has reſolv'd this Queſtion, by telling us, that (*d*) *the Wicked, through the Pride of his Countenance*, will not ſeek *after God, neither is God in all his Ways*: For, he muſt be a Stranger to the Conſtitution of the human Mind, who does not know, (*e*) that it is frequently biaſs'd by its Affections, and miſled in its Judgment of Things by Intereſt and Paſſion; that Men are difficultly perſuaded to embrace diſagreeable Opinions, and too eaſily induc'd to believe what they wiſh to be true. Now the natural Notion of a God (before it comes to be corrupted) is, that he is a moſt pure and holy Being, who has expreſs'd his utter Deteſtation of all Wickedneſs; has threatened the Commiſſion of it with dreadful Penalties; and has both a Right and Power to inflict what he threatens; and, as long as this Notion remains upon Men's Minds, it is next to impoſſible they ſhould run any great Lengths in Impiety: But the Misfortune is here——they find in themſelves ſome ſtrong Inclinations to Things, that are prohibited, (*f*) *the Law in their Members warring againſt the Law of their Minds*; and thereupon, preſuming on God's Goodneſs, and their own Reſolutions of future Amendment, they ſuffer themſelves to be ſedue'd into Wickedneſs, which, by its Agreeableneſs to their *carnal* Appetites, tempts them to frequent Repetitions of it, 'till their Wills become *captivated*, and enſlaved by Cuſtom to an inveterate Habit of Sin.

THE Senſe of a God however (which is not yet quite extinguiſh'd) will, at certain Intervals, be breaking in upon them, and ſpoiling the Reliſh of their forbidden Pleaſures; whereupon they hold it neceſſary, either to abandon their Sins, or to find out ſome Expedients againſt this Boſom-Tormentor. For, being advanc'd thus far through a fond Indulgence of their Sin, and (*g*) finding their Road *grateful*, the Return *tedious*, and the Viſage of Repentance ſo *auſtere*, that, if they put themſelves under her Conduct, they muſt loſe all that they know how to prize and eſteem; and theſe Thoughts making deeper Impreſſions, than any Thing future can, upon Minds, whoſe Reaſonings are now grown weak, and Conſideration little, what can they reſolve, but to go on? But becauſe to go on, and, at the ſame Time, to look back is

(*a*) Prov. i. 24, &c. (*b*) *Young*'s Ser. Vol. I. (*c*) *Scot*'s Ch. Life, Part II. ch. 3. (*d*) Pſ. x. 4.
(*e*) *Abernethy*'s Ser. Vol. I. (*f*) Rom. vii. 23. (*g*) *Young*'s Ser. Vol. I.

diſtracting, they therefore reſolve to take Courage, and (to *ſtrengthen themſelves in Wickedneſs*) either ſo far engage in the Hurry of worldly Buſineſs, as to have no *Leiſure*, or ſo far immerſe themſelves in a Deluge of Senſuality, as to have no *Inclination* to think of any Thing elſe: And, thus they ſtrive to bear down all Thought and Conſideration of their Condition in one Round of trifling Amuſements, or to ſtupify and drown their Reaſon and Conſcience in continual Exceſſes and Debauches, till, in Time, they commenſe *Atheiſts*, out of downright *Sottiſhneſs* and *Stupidity*, and come, at laſt, to believe nothing of the Truth of any religious Principles, becauſe they never think any Thing about them; but chuſe rather to incur (*a*) *their own Condemnation, that, tho' Light be come into the World*, yet *they love Darkneſs, rather than Light, becauſe their Deeds are evil.*

Pride *and* Self-Conceit.

It is not every Unbeliever however, that lives under the Power of his bodily Luſts and Paſſions. Some ſee the groſs Deformity of them, and are aſham'd of ſuch *brutal* Courſes, as ſink them below the Uſe of human Reaſon; and yet theſe Men may chance to have *inward* Vices, which will give their Minds an unhappy Bent towards Infidelity: For Infidelity often ariſes from *Pride*, and *Vanity*, and *Self-Conceit*, which diſpoſe Men of Parts and Learning to an Affectation of *Singularity*, and a Deſire of ſeeming wiſer than other People, by maintaining *Paradoxes*, and contradicting all Opinions, that ſeem to be well eſtabliſh'd, for this very Reaſon, becauſe they are ſo: And, becauſe the fundamental Truths of Religion have met with a general Approbation, this gives them a fairer Opportunity ſtill of ſhewing their uncommon Sagacity and Penetration, by undertaking to oppoſe them. Hence it is that we find ſo many, (*b*) *vainly puffed up by their fleſhly Mind*, peremptorily declaring, (*c*) that all *Religion* is a mere *Trick*, contriv'd by the Art of Princes, and conſerv'd by the Intereſt of Prieſts; quarrelling and finding fault with the holy *Scriptures*, as a Bundle of Abſurdities, Contradictions, and Inconſiſtences; diſcarding all *Myſteries*, becauſe they are too hard to be conceived, even by themſelves, who have Capacities (as they imagine) extenſive to any Thing; running down the Doctrine of Spirits, and all Teſtimonies of their Apparitions, as idle Fictions of ſome diſtemper'd Brain; affirming that their Souls are nothing, but (*d*) *the Breath in their Noſtrils, and a little Spark in the moving of their Hearts*, and muſt therefore extinguiſh with their Bodies; and maintaining, that there will be no Reſurrection, no future Judgment, becauſe, when we (*e*) *die, we are as Water ſpilt upon the Ground, which cannot be gathered up again.*

These are ſome of the Subjects, which thoſe, who affect to *break* out of the common Road, and to oppoſe Opinions, which have met with a general Reception, love to debate and deny: But, (*f*) becauſe *Treaſon* and *Blaſphemy* are entertained with a greater *Guſt*, than private Calumny or Detraction, and the ſame Expreſſion is much wittier, when it ſtrikes at God, or the King, than when it is levell'd againſt an *Herd* of common Mortals, it hence comes to paſs, that theſe vain and arrogant Creatures, after ſome *preliminary* Eſſays upon other *Topicks*, at laſt undertake to prove that God is no more than a kind of *neceſſary and blind Cauſe of Things*; at beſt, but *the Soul of the World*; and perhaps but a mere *Phantom* and Illuſion, becauſe of him they can form no Idea, (as they ſay) and what they can form no Idea of, they affirm is *nothing*, and, conſequently, that there is no ſuch Thing as a *God*.

These are the ſeveral Steps, by which the Men of Speculation, who affect to appear greater and wiſer than others, advance themſelves to abſolute Infidelity and *Atheiſm*; which being a *peculiar* Doctrine, and directly contradictory to the common Notions of Mankind, is (as we ſaid) upon that very Account, more adapted to the Singularity of their Temper. But what ſays the Apoſtle in this Caſe? (*g*) *Beware, leſt any Man ſpoil you through Philoſophy, and vain Deceit, after the Tradition of Men, and after the Rudiments of the World*: And what ſays the Lord by the Mouth of his Prophet? *(h) Stand ye in the Ways, and ſee, and ask for the old Paths, where is the good Way, and walk therein, and ye ſhall find Reſt for your Souls.*

A Summary of ſeveral other Cauſes.

I might produce ſeveral other Cauſes; ſuch as a *ſuperficial* Inſight into natural Philoſophy, *ſuperſtitious* Repreſentations concerning God, *raſh* Judgments of divine Providence,

(*a*) John iii. 19. (*b*) Col. ii. 18. (*c*) *Young*'s Ser. Vol. I (*d*) Wiſdom ii. 2. (*e*) Sam. xiv. 14.
(*f*) *Gaſtrel*'s Ser. at *Boyle*'s Lect. (*g*) Col. ii. 8. (*h*) Jer. vi. 16.

vidence, the Cuſtom of *ridiculing* the moſt ſacred Things, Mens *taking up* Religion without Examination, *placing* it in the little Opinions of Sects and Parties, and *meaſuring* it by the Practice and Pretences of Hypocrites; together with the Want of a ſober Education in the Time of Youth, profane Neglect of God's publick Worſhip, groſs Abuſe of Plenty and Proſperity, and the Impudence and Impunity of ſuch, as are ſcandalouſly vicious and profane; all which have (ſome Way or other) a mighty Tendency to this great deſtructive Error: But I chuſe rather to conclude with this one Remark, *viz.* that, ſince the Avenues to Infidelity are ſo *many*, and the Danger of our falling into ſome of them ſo very *great*, the Caution which the Apoſtle gives us, ſhould always be had in Remembrance; *(a) Take heed, leſt there be in any of you an evil Heart of Unbelief, in departing from the living God; and exhort one another daily, while it is called* To-day, *leſt any of you be harden'd thro' the Deceitfulneſs of Sin.*

SECT. II.

Of the Nature and Attributes of GOD.

I believe in God.

WE have, in the former Section, endeavour'd to prove the Being of a God, and to anſwer ſuch Objections, as are uſually made againſt it; and we now proceed to enquire into his glorious and tranſcendent Nature, and to delineate him in his excellent and divine Perfections, which are certainly included in the firſt Article of the *Creed*, becauſe, in profeſſing our Belief of a God, it is implied, that we have ſome Knowledge of his *eſſential* Properties: But here the poſing Queſtions, which *Zophar* puts to *Job*, meet, and accoſt us, *(b) Canſt thou by ſearching find out God? Canſt thou find out the Almighty to Perfection? It is as high as Heaven, what canſt thou do? Deeper than Hell, what canſt know? The Meaſure thereof is longer than the Earth, and broader than the Sea.* We acknowledge, indeed, that God cannot be comprehended in Man's Thought, nor can all the Deity (as it is in its own native Perfections) be imagin'd by us; but ſtill we have ſome Reaſon to hope, that, tho' *(c) his Face may not be ſeen*, becauſe the redundant Luſtre of the Deity hinders him from being directly look'd upon, yet from his *Back Parts*, or thoſe ſeveral Qualities, which he has diſtributed ſo liberally among his Creatures, we may catch ſome ſhort Glimpſe of him, and behold this glorious *Sun* in its *Reflection*.

The Difficulty of conceiving what God is.

Now, if we look into the World, we cannot but perceive a * Gradation of Creatures, one above another: Some, that have barely *Being*, as Earth, Air, and Water; ſome, that beſides Being, have *Life*, as Plants, Trees, and other Vegetables; ſome, that, beſides Life, have *Senſe* and Perception, as Brute Animals; ſome, that, beſides Senſe, have Reaſon and Cogitation, as Men: But, between Men and God, there is an immenſe *Chaſm*, and therefore we may reaſonably ſuppoſe, that, in the Regions above, there are Beings, which we call *Angels*, as far ſurpaſſing us in Wiſdom and Knowledge, as we do Brutes; and that among theſe, there are ſeveral † Orders and Degrees of Eminence, ſome excelling others in

(a) Heb. iii. 12, 13. (b) Job xi. 7, &c. (c) Ex. xxxiii. 23.

* The ingenious Author of the *Diſcourſes*, concerning the *Being and Attributes of God*, has expreſſed this Matter in Terms ſo elegant, that I cannot forbear tranſcribing them. "The low dark Outworks of this "ſtately Building, *ſays he, i. e.* the whole Maſs of extended paſſive Bulk, in itſelf ſo mean and contemptible, "is formed into various Beatity by the Energy of the Spirit, which inhabits it. From this there is a gradual "*Aſcent* towards the utmoſt Height of Excellence, and every riſing *Step* in the Scale carries in it a *growing* "Diſplay of Original Perfection. *Vegetation* itſelf is a vaſt Improvement upon dead Matter, ſhewing the ſu- "perior *plaſtick* Virtue of Spirit; but *animal Senſation* and Spontaneity, (however low in Compariſon) are "ſtrong Images of Underſtanding and Activity. *Human Intelligence*, with its various Powers, Exerciſes, "and Employments, is the higheſt in our World, and leads us directly to the great Original, it was formed "by, the *uncreated Mind*. Between theſe two there is a mighty *Chaſm*; and we may well imagine many "intermediate Orders of celeſtial Spirits, ſuperior to us, tho' the higheſt of them at an immenſe Diſtance "from *unoriginated* Exiſtence. *Abernethy*'s Ser. Vol. I.

† To this Purpoſe we may obſerve, that, not only the Number of theſe *Celeſtial* Inhabitants are ſaid to be *ten Thouſand Times ten Thouſand, and Thouſands of Thouſands*, Rev. v. 11. but that the Conjectures of ſome *ſpeculative* Men have diſtributed them into *nine Orders*, according to the Number of the Words, whereby

in their noble and intellectual Faculties, as much, as the loweſt among them does the moſt exalted Sons of Men. Here therefore we muſt make our Stand; and, if we would form any tolerable Notion of God, take our Riſe from the ſeveral Perfections, we behold in his Creatures; theſe raiſe, and amplify to the utmoſt Stretch of our Imagination; and from them ſeparate and abſtract whatever we perceive to be defective, and imperfect.

Our Manner of doing it.

To take the Specimen from ourſelves (for we know ourſelves beſt) (*a*) in our Compoſition, we find theſe four Ingredients, as we may call them, *Subſtance*, *Life*, *Senſe*, and *Reaſon*, and, to form a Conception of God, each of theſe we muſt attribute to him in the moſt *eminent* Degree, and, at the ſame Time, take Care to free them from every Thing, that implies the leaſt Imperfection.

God ſhewn to be Immenſe, neceſſarily Exiſtent, and a pure Spirit.

Now the Perfections of *Subſtance* are *Amplitude*, and *Fulneſs of Being*. (*b*) By *Amplitude of Subſtance*, I mean its Greatneſs and Largeneſs, in Oppoſition to *Littleneſs*; and, by *Fulneſs of Subſtance*, its having much *Eſſence* or Being in it, in Oppoſition to Things, ſo empty and fleeting in their Nature, that they may be accounted next to *nothing*. In our Apprehenſions of God therefore, we muſt aſcribe to him theſe Perfections of *Subſtance* even to their utmoſt Poſſibility, *i. e.* we muſt conceive of him, as a Being of *infinite Amplitude*, that can neither be confin'd, nor circumſcrib'd in any Space, and ſo conclude him to be *Immenſe*; and as a Being of *infinite Fulneſs of Exiſtence*, that cannot poſſibly ceaſe to be, and muſt therefore be *neceſſarily Exiſtent*. But becauſe *Corporiety*, or material Extenſion is a mighty Defect, and Imperfection of Subſtance, both as to its *Amplitude*, and *Fulneſs of Eſſence*; in attributing to God theſe Perfections, we muſt be mindful to abſtract from them all *Matter*, and material Affections, and ſo conceive him to be a *moſt pure and ſimple Spirit*.

Omnipotent and Eternal.

In like Manner, the Perfections of *Life* are, *Activity*, and *Duration*: By *Activity* I mean a vigorous Power, and Ability to act, in Oppoſition to *Weakneſs*; and by *Duration*, a long Continuance of Life, in Oppoſition to what is *ſhort* and momentary. In our Apprehenſions of God therefore, we muſt aſcribe to him the greateſt poſſible Perfections of Life, *i. e.* we muſt conceive him to be infinitely *active*, and able to perform whatever he pleaſes, both in Heaven and Earth, and ſo conclude him to be *Omnipotent*: And, ſince Life in him had no Beginning, and will never have an End, it will thence follow, that he muſt neceſſarily be *Eternal*: But, becauſe the *Activity* of all created Beings is attended with Labour and Pains, and the *Duration* of all created Life is precarious and dependent, ſhorten'd or prolong'd, according to the Divine Pleaſure and Appointment; in attributing to God the Perfections of *Life*, we muſt be careful to remove from them all the Infirmities of it, and conceive of him, as a Being (*c*) *mighty in Strength, and excellent in Power*, (*d*) *who fainteth not, neither is he weary*, and whoſe Exiſtence is independent, and *from Everlaſting to Everlaſting*.

Happy in himſelf.

Again, the Perfection of *Senſe* conſiſts in *Quickneſs*, and *Sagacity* of Perception, whether it be of *painful* or *pleaſant*, of *grateful* or *ungrateful* Objects. The Happineſs of God's Nature indeed ſecures him from all Perception of Pain and Uneaſineſs; but as he is the Fountain, from whence all Senſe is deriv'd, he muſt needs have a clear Senſation of all that is truly *pleaſant* and *good*; and ſince his Nature contains an *Infinity* of Good, we cannot but imagine, that he is ſenſible of it, and conſequently infinitely pleaſed and delighted with

whereby they are expreſſed in Scripture, and reduc'd theſe Orders to three *Hierarchies*, as they call them; to the *Firſt* of which belong *Seraphim*, *Cherubim*, and *Thrones*; to the *Second*, *Dominions*, *Virtues*, and *Powers*; and to the *Third*, *Principalities*, *Arch-Angels* and *Angels*; and that, in each Hierarchy, there is an exact *Subordination*; ſome are *Aſſiſtantes*, what we may ſtile the *Reſidentiaries* of Heaven, that *ſtand always before the Throne* of God; and others *Miniſtrantes*, what we may call the *Miſſionaries* of Heaven, that are ſent forth, as Need requires, to miniſter to the Faithful upon Earth; that the Province of the one is to *receive* all Orders immediately from God, and the Buſineſs of the other, is immediately to put them in Execution. However this may be, with Relation to the ſtanding *Polity* of that inviſible Kingdom, yet upon Occaſions of more Importance than ordinary, we are aſſur'd, that the higheſt of theſe heavenly *Courtiers* are ſometimes diſpatch'd with Embaſſies to this lower World, as the Angel *Gabriel*, *who ſtands in the Preſence of God* (as himſelf teſtifies, *Luke* i. 19.) was firſt ſent to *Zechariah*, to notify the Approach of the *Meſſiah*, and afterwards to the *Virgin Mary*, to congratulate her Conception of him, *Luke* ch. i. *Edwards*'s Body of Chr. Rel. *Bull*'s Ser. Vol. II. and *Norris*'s Ser.

(*a*) *Scot*'s Ch. Life, Part II. ch. 6. (*b*) *Scot*, ibid. (*c*) Job ix. 4. (*d*) Iſ. xl. 28.

with it: But, becauſe the moſt exquiſite Senſation of the Creatures is attended with ſundry *Affections*, ſuch as Sorrow, Grief, Anger, &c. which argue a *Defect* in their Nature and Happineſs; in attributing to God the Perfection of *Senſe*, we muſt take Care to deduct from it all thoſe Affections, which ariſe from a Perception of *Evil* or *Pain*, and conceive of him as a Being, *infinitely happy* in the Contemplation and Enjoyment of himſelf.

Omniſcient and infinitely wiſe.

ONCE more, the Perfection of *Reaſon* conſiſts in theſe two Things, firſt, *Knowledge* and *Wiſdom*, in the Underſtanding; and ſecondly, *Rectitude* or *Righteouſneſs* in the Will. *Knowledge* is our underſtanding Things, as they are in themſelves, according to their true Natures and Properties; and *Wiſdom* is our conſidering them, as they are *related* to one another, under the Notion of *Means* and *Ends*. In our Conception of God therefore, we muſt aſcribe to him all poſſible Knowledge and Wiſdom, *i. e.* a Comprehenſion infinitely *extenſive*, as having all *knowable* Objects under its immediate Intuition, and infinitely *intenſive* likewiſe, as ſeeing every ſingle Object, in all its Relations, Dependences, and Circumſtances, with a moſt perfect View, and

God, Juſt, and True.

ſo we aſcribe to him *Omniſcience*, and *infinite Wiſdom*. In like manner, by *Rectitude* in the Will (which is the other Perfection of *Reaſon*) is meant a *Conformity* of the Will, and, conſequently, of the Affections and Actions, to all that right Reaſon dictates and preſcribes; in conceiving of God therefore, we muſt attribute to him all thoſe *moral* Perfections, which conſiſt in the full and intire Compliance of his *Will* with the Dictates of his infallible *Reaſon*, and ſo pronounce him a Being of infinite *Goodneſs*, *Juſtice*, and *Truth*.

A Deſcription of God, from his Attributes

THUS you ſee, that, by attributing to God the *Perfections* which he hath communicated to his Creatures; by ſuppoſing theſe Perfections to be all in his Nature *boundleſs* and unlimited; and by abſtracting whatever Defects or Imperfections, we diſcern in them, or in their Operations, we are led to a competent Knowledge of God, and may not improperly deſcribe him, "one ſimple, and uncompounded "Being; in his *Nature*, Spiritual, Eternal, "and Immutable, Self-exiſtent, and Self-"ſufficient, Infinite in all Perfections, Om-"nipotent, Omniſcient, Omnipreſent, Good "and Gracious, Righteous and Juſt, True "and Faithful, Pure and Holy; and yet, "after all that we either do, or can know "of him, *Incomprehenſible*.

Theſe Attributes not diſtinct from God.

THESE are the ſeveral *Properties*, which we aſcribe to God: But then we are to remember, that they have no *ſeparate* and diſtinct Subſiſtence in the Divine Nature, altho', in our Manner of conceiving them, they ſeem to have, according to their different and external *Operations*. (*a*) Thus, when God puniſhes, we conſider his Act, as an Act of *Juſtice*; when he pardons, as an Act of *Mercy*; and when he promiſes, as an Act of *Goodneſs*; and yet we are not to ſuppoſe, that his Juſtice, Mercy, and Goodneſs flow from ſo many Principles really diſtinct in him, but all from one pure, ſimple, and undivided Principle. Tho' therefore the Divine Nature be conceiv'd by us, ſometimes under one Notion, and ſometimes under another; yet is it but one entire *Perfection*, one ſimple and indiviſible *Principle* of Action, and all the Difference or Diſtinction in it is in our Notions or Apprehenſions only: And, with this ſingle Obſervation we ſhall now proceed to prove and illuſtrate the ſeveral Divine *Attributes*, that are above ennumerated.

The Simplicity of God.

WHEN therefore we ſay, that *we believe in God*, it is ſuppoſed, in the firſt Place, that we conceive him to be a *ſimple*, and uncompounded Being, *without Body, and without Parts, or Paſſions*, as our *Church*, in her *Articles*, explains it; and for this we have a ſufficient Reaſon. (*b*) For, ſince the Principle, and Ingredients, that concur to the Making of any Thing, muſt be *antecedent* to the Thing made, if the Divine Eſſence were compounded, there muſt have been ſomething in Nature before God, which is inconſiſtent with his being the *firſt Cauſe*; and therefore we find ſome of the wiſeſt of the Heathen World conſtantly affirming, *that it is impoſſible the firſt Mover (or* God) *ſhould have any Magnitude, but muſt neceſſarily be devoid of all Parts, perfectly unmix'd with Matter, and without any Thing that is paſſable.*

GOD indeed, in Alluſion to the Parts of human Body, is frequently known in Scripture to ſpeak of his Attributes and Operations after *the Manner of Men*; to repreſent his Knowledge by his *having Eyes*; his Power, by his *having Hands*; and his So-

(*a*) *Fiddes*'s Body of Div. Vol. I.

(*b*) *Wilkins* of the Prin. of Nat. Rel.

vereign Dominion, by his *ſitting upon a Throne, where Thouſands of Thouſands ſtand before him, and ten Thouſand Times ten Thouſand miniſter unto him:* (*a*) But this is only done in Condeſcenſion to our Capacities, too weak to contemplate *naked* Truths, without the Intervention of theſe *metaphorical* Expreſſions, which have a natural Aptitude to forward our Conception of Things, that would otherwiſe be quite unintelligible. We may obſerve however, that, when it is requiſite to ſpeak more ſtrictly concerning the Divine Nature, the holy Scripture takes care to exclude from it every Reſemblance of *Corporiety* whatever: And, accordingly, we find the *Jewiſh* Law-giver reminding the People, that, in all the miraculous Appearances, and extraordinary Manifeſtations, God had ever vouchſafed them, (and theſe were not a few) they had never ſeen (*b*) *any Manner of Similitude:* For which Reaſon the Prophet puts the Queſtion, (*c*) *to whom will ye liken God? or what Likeneſs will ye compare unto him, who ſitteth upon the Circle of the Earth, and the Inhabitants thereof are as Graſhoppers; who ſtretcheth out the Heavens as a Curtain, and ſpreadeth them out as a Tent to dwell in?*

His Spirituality.

AS God, we believe that his Nature is *ſpiritual:* For ſince all Things, that we are acquainted with, are reducible to the two Claſſes of *Matter* and *Spirit*; and Matter in itſelf is a dull, ſluggiſh, and inſenſible Subſtance, which (*d*) (however refin'd, mov'd, or modified,) can never produce an *intelligent* Being; we muſt, of Neceſſity, rank God in that *Claſs*, where the greateſt Excellencies are conſpicuous; and to this Purpoſe we find *Pythagoras* (*e*) *making two Principles, one active, which is Mind or God, and the other paſſive*, viz. *the Matter of the World*; and then affirming (as *Lactantius* acquaints us with his Sentiments) that *there is but one God, whom he calls an Incorporeal Mind, diffuſed throughout all Nature, and giving vital Senſe to all Creatures.* Our bleſſed Saviour, in like manner, has aſſured us, *that* (*f*) *God is a Spirit*; but then, as there may be (for any Thing we know) as great a Diverſity in the *ſpiritual*, as there is in the *material* World, we muſt not imagine, that we have form'd an *adequate* Idea of God's Nature, when we repreſent him to our Thoughts, as a living, active, and intelligent Being, eſſentially different from corporeal Subſtance; but we muſt likewiſe conceive of him, (*g*) as a Being infinitely ſurpaſſing, not only the Souls of Men, but all other *intellectual* Natures and Spirits whatever. Our Spirits, we find, are ſubject to Pains and Changes in their Condition; but the moſt perfect Spirit is infinitely above the Reach of Sufferings, and infinitely remov'd from all Poſſibility of Change, having no Principles of Decay *within him*, and being incapable of ſuffering from any Thing *without*. (*h*) Our ſpiritual Part indeed ſhall outlive the preſent State, and, being diſlodg'd from the *earthly Tabernacle*, ſubſiſt for ever ſeparately; but then there is a great Difference between our *Immortality*, and God's: *Ours*, as we were *created for his good Pleaſure*, continually depends upon it, and may ceaſe if he pleaſes; but it is impoſſible that he ſhould not be the *living God*, and the ſame immutable Spirit *Yeſterday, To-day, and for ever:* And therefore,

AS God, we believe that his Nature is *eternal*: For, ſince it is, in ſome Degree, a Perfection *to be*, and a greater Degree of that Perfection *to continue to be*, and to *owe that Continuance to another*; we muſt, when we conceive God to be the moſt perfect Being, conceive him to be infinite in this Perfection likewiſe; (*i*) and that, as his *Power* is not *controul'd* by any ſuperior *Strength*, nor his *Immenſity terminated* by any Bounds of *Place*, ſo neither is his *Duration limitted* by any Periods of *Time*. For indeed how ſhould it be ſo limitted? As he is the ſupreme Being, who firſt gave Exiſtence to all other Things, he could not poſſibly have any Beginning himſelf, and muſt therefore neceſſarily have exiſted from all Eternity; and as he has neceſſarily exiſted from all Eternity *paſt*, independently, and of himſelf, he cannot poſſibly be liable to be depriv'd of his Being, and muſt therefore neceſſarily exiſt for all Eternity *to come*. For (*k*) that Being, which has no other Cauſe of its Exiſtence, but the abſolute *Neceſſity* of its own Nature, muſt, of Neceſſity, have exiſted *from everlaſting*, without Beginning, and muſt, of Neceſſity, exiſt *to ever-*

Eternity.

(*a*) *Fiddes*'s Body of Divin. Vol. I. (*b*) Deut. iv. 15. (*c*) Iſ. xl. 18, 22. (*d*) Vide *Bentley*'s Ser. at *Boyle*'s Lect. wherein this Point is made out to the full. (*e*) Plut. de placit. Philoſ. L. I. c. 3. (*f*) John iv. 24. (*g*) *Clarke*'s Ser. Vol. I. (*h*) *Abernethy*'s Ser. Vol. I. (*i*) *Clarke*'s Ser. Vol. I. (*k*) *Clarke*'s Ser. at *Boyle*'s Lect.

everlaſting, without End. This is a Concluſion, which ſome of the wiſeſt *Heathens* were known to make, *viz. That which was always, and never had a Beginning, muſt always continue in the ſame Manner*; and therefore well might the *Pſalmiſt* declare, (*a*) *Before the Mountains were brought forth, or ever the Earth and the World were made, thou art God from Everlaſting, and World without End.* Thou indeed (*b*) *haſt laid the Foundations of the Earth, and the Heavens are the Work of thy Hands; they ſhall periſh, but thou ſhalt endure; they ſhall wax old, as does a Garment, but thou art the ſame, and thy Years ſhall not fail:* And therefore,

Immutability. *AS God*, we muſt believe that in his Nature he is *immutable*. (*c*) The Name *Jehovah*, which he aſſumes to himſelf in Scripture, ſignifies, that he is *underiv'd*, *unoriginated*, and *ſelf-exiſtent*, the firſt Cauſe, from which all other Things aroſe, and on which they always muſt depend. Other Things may continue to Eternity, but then they depend upon the Pleaſure of their Maker; for the ſame Power, that created, can annihilate their *Subſtance*, as well as alter their *Forms*: That only, which does not owe its Being, or any of its Perfections, to any external Cauſe, which depends upon *nothing*, can be acted upon by *nothing*, influenc'd by no *Power*, impair'd by no *Time*, or varied by no *Accident*; has a fix'd immutable *Permanency* of Being in itſelf, * abſolutely incapable of any Alteration. (*d*) We ſee all Things here indeed in a perpetual Flux, Matter continually changing its Form, our Bodies every Day altering their Compoſition, our Souls varying in the Exerciſe of their rational Faculties, and our Thoughts and Deſires, our Hopes and Affections, never ſteady and permanent: But it is not ſo with the *firſt Cauſe*, the original, ſelf-ſufficient, and underiv'd Fountain of Being, whoſe Eſſence is always the ſame, and whoſe Powers and Perfections vary not with any Changes of Time: For *'tis neceſſary*, ſays *Seneca*, *that he ſhould be always pleaſed with the ſame Things, who can be pleaſed with nothing, but what is beſt; nor can this be any Prejudice to his Liberty or Power, ſince he is his own Neceſſity, i. e.* nothing from without, but his own natural Perfections lays this Neceſſity upon him. The Declaration therefore, which God makes of himſelf, (*e*) *I am the Lord, I change not*, is very *emphatical*; nor is the Deſcription, which St. *James* gives us of (*f*) *this Father of Light, in whom is no Variableneſs, nor Shadow of turning*, leſs remarkable: For the Compariſon, here taken from the Conſideration of that, which, in corporeal Things, is leaſt of all ſubject to Change, *viz.* the *Sun* ſhining in the Heavens, is extremely elegant. The Sun is the greateſt, the moſt regular, the moſt ſtable, and conſtant Diſpenſer of Light and Heat, and fruitful Influences upon the whole Face of this inferior World; yet is its Influence varied by different Motions, by Day and Night, by Winter and Summer, by Clouds and Shadows, and by Alterations in its own Body: But God, the *Father of ſpiritual Light*, the Author and Diſpenſer of *all good and perfect Gifts*, has in him no Motion, no Uncertainty, no Alteration of any of his Perfections, *no Variableneſs, neither Shadow of Turning:* And therefore,

Unity. *AS God*, we muſt believe, that he is abſolutely *one*, and that, beſides him, there is *no other*. For, ſince the moſt eaſy and natural Conception, we can form of him, is, that he is a moſt perfect, *unoriginated*, and therefore a *neceſſary-exiſtent* Being, the Maker and Ruler of the Univerſe, we can hardly imagine any Reaſon, why there ſhould be a *Plurality* of Gods, when the Exiſtence of one is ſufficient to all the Purpoſes of Creation and Providence, and the Suppoſal of more can be of no other Uſe, than to breed Confuſion and Diſorder in the World, which a *Contrariety* of Wills in ſo many Beings, abſolutely independent on each other, muſt, in a ſhort Time, neceſſarily produce. But now, if we look into the general *Syſtem*, as it appears before us, (*g*) we ſhall ſoon perceive that plain *Connection*, and Dependance of one Thing upon another, through the whole material Uni-

(*a*) Pſ. xc. 2. (*b*) Pſ. cii. 24, &c. (*c*) *Stephens's* Ser. Vol. I.

* There is an excellent Argument to this Purpoſe, which, according to his Manner, *Plato* has deliver'd in a more copious Way of Expreſſion, but the Subſtance of it is this,——All Change muſt either be *involuntary*, and upon Neceſſity, or *voluntary*, and upon Choice. Now God, being the moſt *powerful* Being, cannot by any Thing be neceſſitated to an *involuntary* Change: And for a *voluntary* Change, whereas it muſt be either for the *better*, or the *worſe*, it is not imaginable, that any *wiſe* Being ſhould be willing to change for the *worſe*, nor is it poſſible, that any *perfect* Being ſhould change for the *better*; and therefore it is neceſſary, that the Divine Nature ſhould be immutable. *Wilkins's* Nat. Rel.

(*d*) *Abernethey's* Ser. Vol. I. (*e*) Mal. iii. 6. (*f*) Jam. i. 17. (*g*) *Clarke's* Ser. Vol. I.

Univerſe; the *Diſpoſition* of the Air, and Sea, and Winds; the *Motions* of the Sun, and Moon, and Stars; and the uſeful *Viciſſitudes* of Seaſons, for the regular Production of the various Fruits of the Earth, ſo uniform, and well adapted, that we can by no Means forbear concluding, that, as all Things were at firſt faſhion'd, and ſet in order, ſo are they now under the Guidance and Direction of *one* Power, under the Dominion of *one* God. 'Tis (*a*) from divided Counſels, that we naturally expect interfering Schemes; but as, on the contrary, we ſee nothing, but an univerſal Harmony, we may well be allow'd to aſk, from whence this Harmony comes? To ſay from *Chance* is atheiſtically, and very abſurdly, to attribute the moſt perfect of all Events, *Univerſal Order*, to no Cauſe at all; and yet, if we ſay *from Deſign*, it muſt be one comprehenſive Deſign, forming the whole Scheme of Nature and Providence, which directly brings us to what we are looking for, one Sovereign, commanding Intelligence in the Univerſe, or *one God*. And, upon this Conſideration, it doubtleſs is, that *Socrates*, who was a Martyr for his Opinion, and *Plato*, who was not afraid to follow his Maſter in it, both maintain, that (*b*) *the Deity is one ſingle, ſelf-exiſtent Being, of a ſimple Nature, and truly good*, who preſerves the World, (as (*c*) another expreſſes it) and every Thing, in its conſtant Courſe and Rotation; gives Motion to the Sun and Moon, and poiſes the Earth upon her Baſis; and therefore (*d*) *hear, O* Iſrael, *the Lord thy God is* one *Lord, he is the God in Heaven above, and upon the Earth beneath, there is none elſe; for* (*e*) *tho' there be, that are called Gods, (as there are Gods many, and Lords many) to us there is but* one *God, the Father, of whom are all Things, and* one *Lord* Jeſus Chriſt, *by whom are all Things, and we by him.*

Self exiſtence. *AS God*, we muſt believe, that in his Nature he is *Self-exiſtent*: (*f*) For, whatever exiſts at preſent, muſt either have come into Being out of nothing, and abſolutely without any Cauſe, (which is a plain *Contradiction,*) or it muſt have been produc'd by ſome *external* Cauſe, which cannot poſſibly be true of every Thing, becauſe ſomething muſt have always exiſted *eternally*, and *independently*, or otherwiſe nothing would ever have been at all. Now, whatever it was, that exiſted *eternally*, muſt neceſſarily be *Self-exiſtent*, *i. e.* it muſt exiſt by an abſolute Neceſſity in its own Nature, otherwiſe, (*g*) we muſt ſuppoſe, that there was ſome other Power, ſufficient to hinder its Exiſtence, which we cannot do, without allowing the Exiſtence of another *eternal* Being, by whoſe Power and Permiſſion the Being, we are now talking of, exiſts. But then, what we take from the one muſt be granted to the other, and, conſequently, we muſt be forced to allow at laſt, that there muſt be ſome *original* eternal Being, which always neceſſarily exiſted; and this neceſſary Exiſtence we aſcribe to God alone, as his *tranſcendent* Excellency and Perfection. The Truth is, (*h*) comparatively ſpeaking, nothing has *Being*, but God, becauſe nothing exiſts in the Manner that he does. We (*i*) *walk* all *in a vain Shew, i. e.* are but a kind of walking Shades; and * all the Things, we are converſant with, are but Shadows and Semblances; nay, in the Senſe of the Prophet, we may be reduc'd much lower (*k*) *for all Nations before him are as nothing, and they are counted to him leſs than than nothing, and Vanity*; and therefore the *Apoſtle* might juſtly deſcribe him, as the only Being, (*l*) *that has Immortality i. e.* immutably, and independently, *dwelling in Light, which no Man can approach, to whom be Honour, and Power everlaſting, Amen.*

AS God, we muſt believe that he is † *perfectly happy*, and *ſelf-ſufficient*: For he, that hath *created all Things, and for whoſe Pleaſure they are, and were created*, that hath *Self ſufficiency.*

(*a*) *Abernethy*'s Ser. Vol. I. (*b*) Plut. de placit Philoſ. (*c*) Ariſt. de Mundo. (*d*) Deut. vi. 4. and iv. 39. (*e*) 1 Cor. v. 6. (*f*) *Clarke*'s Ser. at *Boyle*'s Lect. (*g*) *Gaſtrel*'s Ser. at *Boyle*'s Lect. (*h*) *Edwards*'s Body of the Chriſt. Rel. Vol. I. (*i*) Pſ. xxxix. 6.

* This is not only the Language of the *Scripture*, but of the moſt *intelligent Philoſophers*, and *Moraliſts* among the *Pagans*; for when they diſcourſe of the Properties of *true* Being and Exiſtence, they conclude it is not properly to be attributed to the Things of this World. Thus *Plato*, who is one of the ſublimeſt of them (as *Seneca* repreſents him, and, at the ſame Time, approves of what he ſays) denies, that any of theſe Impreſſions, which we ſee and feel, which are ſubſervient to our outward Senſes, and kindle and ſtir up our Paſſions, are of the Number of thoſe Things that *truly are:* For *God only exiſts* (ſays *Plutarch* de Iſid. & Oſir.) in compariſon of him, *we have no Eſſence or Being at all.* *Edwards*'s Body of Chriſt. Rel. Vol. I.

(*k*) Iſa. xl. 17. (*l*) 1 Tim. vi. 16.

† Nothing was more frequent, among the beſt *Heathen* Authors, than to call the *Deity, the moſt happy and moſt perfect Being*; and therefore happy, becauſe Felicity does naturally reſult from Perfection. This they

hath all *Might* and *Dominion* both in Heaven and Earth, and *Wiſdom* infinite to direct his *Power* to the Accompliſhment of all his Ends, can meet with nothing able to reſiſt his Will; nor ſtand in need of any thing capable to ſatisfy his Deſires; and therefore the Royal *Pſalmiſt* introduces him ſpeaking in this wiſe, (*a*) *All the Beaſts of the Foreſt are mine, and ſo are the Cattle upon a thouſand Hills: I know all the Fowls upon the Mountains, and the wild Beaſts of the Field are in my Sight; and therefore, if I be hungry, I will not tell thee, for the whole World is mine, and all that is therein.* (*b*) Cou'd we ſuppoſe, that the Enjoyment, or Contemplation of any thing without, cou'd contribute to the Happineſs of the divine Nature, God, as the Cauſe of all other Beings, and of all their Powers and Perfections, muſt neceſſarily take all the *Complacency* in them, that they are capable of exciting: But the Goodneſs of his Creatures *extendeth not to him.* (*c*) *'Tis no Pleaſure to the Almighty that thou art righteous, neither is it any Gain to him, that thou makeſt thy Ways perfect.* He is infinitely and abſolutely happy in the Perfections and internal Operations of his own Nature. He is indeed his own *Light*, and his own *Object*; and as nothing without is capable of acting upon him, or diſturbing his Action, either of aſſiſting his Powers, or giving them any Moleſtation; his Happineſs muſt be fix'd and immoveable, without Mixture or Meaſure, and his Self-enjoyment ſecure and everlaſting, without Allay or Intermiſſion: And therefore,

Perfection. *AS God*, we muſt believe that he is *infinite in all Perfections:* For ſince all the Excellences, that we perceive in the Creation, are deriv'd from him, and nothing can communicate to another, what it has not more eminently in itſelf; unleſs it be minded to exhauſt its own *Stock*, (which cannot be ſaid of a Being, that is utterly inexhauſtible) it muſt neceſſarily follow, that all the good Qualities, which we ſee diſpers'd up and down in the World, are only ſo many Rays and Emanations from this *Sun of Righteouſneſs*, this Fountain of all Perfections, which has them *concenter'd* in himſelf, in an higher and more excellent Degree, than our finite Underſtandings are able to conceive, and diſtributes them out to his Creatures, in little *Streams*, proportionate to their Wants, and without any Diminution of his own *Fulneſs*; Even as the Sun illuminates, beautifies, and refreſhes all Things within its Syſtem, without any Abatements of its Splendor. To the ſame Purpoſe we find the *Apoſtle*, in his Oration to the *Athenians*, inculcating this Truth, *viz.* that *God* (*d*) *needeth not any Thing*, which he proves by this Reaſon, *ſeeing he giveth to all Life, and Breath, and all Things*; as much as to ſay, that *he*, on whom all Creatures depend, not only for their Life and Exiſtence, but for every other good Quality, they poſſeſs, cannot but be abſolutely perfect in *himſelf*, and, whatever Excellence he communicates to others, have, in the higheſt *Perfection*, ſeated in his own Nature, (*e*) "whoſe "*Majeſty* no Thought can comprehend; "whoſe *Glory* no Eye can behold; whoſe "*Power* no Strength can reſiſt; whoſe "*Juſtice* no Art can evade; whoſe *Truth* "no Time can out-laſt; whoſe *Wiſdom* "no Difficulties can out-match; from "whoſe *Preſence* no Swiftneſs can flee; "from whoſe *Knowledge* no Secrecy can "conceal us; and of whoſe *Bounty* and "*Goodneſs* every Creature is made Par-"taker:" For (*f*) *thy Mercy, O Lord, reacheth up to the Heavens, and thy Faithfulneſs unto the Clouds; thy Righteouſneſs ſtandeth like the ſtrong Mountains, and thy Judgments are like the great Deep.*

Sufficiency.

AS God, we muſt believe that he is *omnipotent*, or can do all Things: And, to help our Conceptions in this Matter, (*g*) let us imagine a *Principle*, from which all other Power is deriv'd, on which it depends, and to which it is perfectly ſubject: A *Principle*, which can do, not only what any finite Creature can, but even more and greater Things, than all Beings, join'd together, are able to accompliſh: A *Principle*, which admits of no Oppoſition, but can check and controul at Pleaſure, and even bear down before it, and *annihilate* all other Power, that ſtands in its Way: A *Principle*, which can do all Things in the moſt perfect Manner, at the firſt Eſſay, in an Inſtant, with a Word's ſpeaking, and with the greateſt Eaſe; and yet, *Omnipotence.*

they held ſo *eſſential* to the Notion of a God, that it was one of the Ways, they took, to find out what Properties were fit to attribute to him, and what not; and, however their Philoſophers might differ among themſelves, concerning the other Perfections of the Divine Nature, in this they all agreed,—that it was perfectly happy, without any Thing to diſturb, and wanting nothing to compleat, its Felicity. *Tillotſon's* Ser. Vol. III.

(*a*) Pſal. l. 10, *&c.* (*b*) *Fiddes's* Body of Div. Vol. 1. (*c*) Job xxii. 3. (*d*) Acts xvii. 25.
(*e*) *Clarke's* Ser. Vol. 6. (*f*) Pſal. xxxvi. 5, 6. (*g*) *Tillotſon's* Ser. Vol. 2.

after we have ſuppos'd all this, we fall infinitely ſhort in our Conception of the Divine Omnipotence, *(a) Which is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we can think* or imagine, *(b) according to the mighty Working, whereby it can even ſubdue all Things to itſelf.* For, look into the Works of Creation and Providence, and then the Heathen, by the bare Light of Nature, will tell us, that *(c) there is nothing which* the great *Maker of all Things*, and *Ruler of the World, cannot do, and that without any Kind of Labour.* For what is he not able to do, who, by his Strength has fix'd the *Pillars of the round World*, and *(d)* by his Spirit *garniſh'd the Heavens*; *(e) who hath ſtretched out the North over the empty Place, and hanged the Earth upon nothing*; *(f)* who *hath divided the Sea by his Power*, and *(g) weighed the Mountains in Scales, and the Hills in a Balance?* What is he not able to do, who, by his *Providence* upholds the *Order* of the World, and rules the Courſe of Nature; *who makes the Day Spring know its Place, and (h) ſtretches out the Shadows of the Evening*; who commands the Sun to ſhine by Day, and the Moon by Night, and *(i) makes a Decree for the Rain, and a Way for the Lightning of the Thunder?* What is he not able to do, *(k) whoſe Dominion is an everlaſting Dominion, and his Kingdom from Generation to Generation, and who does according to his Will in the Army of Heaven, and among the Inhabitants of the Earth, and none can ſtay his Hand, or ſay unto him what doſt thou? What I ſay is he not able to do*, who has all this Might, and Power, and Dominion over all his Creatures? Even every thing, that either in itſelf does not imply a *Contradiction*, or is not *repugnant* to his leading Attributes, or the *moral* Rectitude and Goodneſs of his Nature; for *(l) far be it from God, that he ſhou'd do Wickedneſs, and from the Almighty, that he ſhou'd commit Iniquity.*

Omnipreſence. AS *God*, we muſt believe that he is *omnipreſent*, or actually in every Place. *(m)* We indeed, by the neceſſary Condition of of our Nature, are *circumſcrib'd*, and finite: We can only be preſent in one determinate Place, nor can we act or move, but within certain Bounds, at one and the ſame Time; but *Infinity* and *Immenſity* are the proper Attributes of God, and therefore we muſt conceive of him, as of a Being, that *fills* all Things, and contains all Things within his own boundleſs Nature; that is not defin'd or limited by any Space, but is preſent, and *co-exiſtent* with all Beings, both *viſible* and *inviſible*, infinitely beyond what we can imagine. All Beings indeed he created at firſt, and, as himſelf muſt have exiſted before the Things which he made, ſo when he made them, he muſt have been preſent with them, and ſtill continue to be preſent with them, now *that he upholdeth them by the Word of his Power*; becauſe they can never be upholden, or govern'd with any Certainty, unleſs the *Wiſdom*, which governs them, be always preſent with them. It was *Pythagoras*'s Notion therefore, (*n*) that *God is, as it were, the common Soul, which pervades all Things, and inſpires the whole Compaſs of Nature*: For (*o*) *which Way ſoever thou turneſt thyſelf* (*ſays* Seneca) *thou ſhalt find him meeting thee: Nothing is without him, for he fills his own Work.* We have leſs Reaſon to wonder therefore, that we find the *Royal Pſalmiſt*, in ſpeaking to God, deſcribe this *noble* Attribute of his in all the becoming Beauties of the moſt exalted Eloquence. (*p*) *Whither ſhall I go from thy Spirit? And whither ſhall I flee from thy Preſence? If I climb up into Heaven, thou art there: If I go down to Hell, thou art there alſo: If I take the Wings of the Morning, and remain in the uttermoſt Parts of the Sea, even there ſhall thy Hand lead me, and thy Right Hand ſhall hold me. If I ſay, peradventure Darkneſs ſhall cover me, then ſhall my Night be turned into Day:* Which I find (*q*) an ingenious Author thus paraphraſing; "Had "I the Command of Univerſal Nature, "ſo that I cou'd tranſport myſelf whither "I pleas'd, for a ſafe Retreat, there is no "Poſſibility of avoiding the Preſence of "God. If I mount up to the utmoſt Ex"tremities of this material World, even "to the *Surface*, that parts it from the "*immenſe Void*, I ſhou'd find myſelf there "within the Verge of his Sovereign Do"minion. If I deſcend to the Darkneſs, "which is hid from all living, there I ſhall "be naked before him. There is no "Obſcurity impenetrable to his all-ſearch"ing Eye: The Wings of the Morning are "not ſwift enough to carry me from his "purſuing

(*a*) Eph. iii. 20. (*b*) Phil. iii. 21. (*c*) Cic. de Divin. (*d*) Job xxvi. 13. (*e*) Job. xxvi. 7. (*f*) Job xxvi. 12. (*g*) Iſa. xl. 12. (*h*) Jer. vi. 4. (*i*) Job xxviii. 26. (*k*) Dan. iv. 34, 35. (*l*) Job. xxxiv. 10. (*m*) *Clarke*'s Ser. Vol. I. (*n*) *Cicero de Nat. Deor.* (*o*) *De Beneficiis.* (*p*) Pſal. cxxxix. 7, &c. (*q*) *Abernethy*'s Ser. Vol. I. p. 204.

" purſuing Hand, and the Shadows of the " Night are as open to his View, as the " brighteſt Sunſhine;" for * *the Darkneſs and Light to him are both alike.* And therefore,

Omniſcience. *AS God*, we muſt believe that he is *omniſcient*, and knoweth all Things.(*a*) We indeed, in our Knowledge and Comprehenſion of Things, are very defective. Our *Senſes* inform us of the external Properties of *ſome few*, that come within the Compaſs of their Perception. Our *Reaſon* leads us a little farther, and diſcovers their inward and hidden Qualities, from which our Senſes are excluded. Our *Imagination* and Conjectures extend to a great *many more*; but then it is with leſs Certainty and Diſtinctneſs. *Angels* may be ſuppoſed to comprehend more Things than we, and with a much quicker and clearer Inſight: They however are bounded with their proper Sphere, as much as we are within ours; but the Knowledge of God is abſolutely unlimited, and perfectly univerſal; infinite as his *Duration*, and boundleſs as his *Immenſity*; extending to all Things, every where, without *Exception*, and to all the Powers and Properties of Things, without *Reſtriction*. More particularly, he knows all the Actions of Men, tho' never ſo ſecret and conceal'd, and (*b*) *pondereth all their* Goings, *that he may give to every one according to his Ways, and according to the Fruit of his Doings.* He knows all their Thoughts and Intentions, for (*c*) *the Lord ſeeth not as Man ſeeth: Man looketh on the outward Appearance, but the Lord looketh on the Heart.* And therefore we find *Seneca* affirming, that *nothing is hid from God, who is intimate in our Minds, and mingles himſelf with our very Thoughts:* For *known unto him*, (*d*) ſays the Apoſtle, are *all his Works, from the Beginning of the World.* The Truth is, (*e*) as the Images of all Things, from everlaſting, were diſtinct, *fair*, and *perfect* in the all-comprehending Mind of God, before they were made; and now, that they are created, all Things, in effect, are the Tranſcripts and Reſemblance of his own Conceptions; his Conſciouſneſs of the one, muſt be the conſummate Knowledge of the other: For ſince there is no Principle, Faculty, or Power in any Being, *viſible* or *inviſible*, but what was firſt adjuſted in its grand Exemplar, the Mind of God; and ſince the Conceptions of his Mind are, at all Times, indelible, and immutable, from hence it muſt needs follow, that the View of his own Conceptions is, at once, a moſt accurate Survey of all created Beings; for we cannot perceive, how any thing can be an Obſtruction to him, who ſees all Things in the firſt Cauſe, the whole Frame of Nature, and all its Parts, together with the full Series of Events, as he laid the *original Plan* of them, before the Foundation of the Univerſe, in his own Counſels; who ſees them, I ſay, as preſently and eaſily, as perfectly and intimately, as clearly and diſtinctly, and as certainly and infallibly (which are all *Perfections* in the divine Knowledge) as we do the Perceptions, and Determinations of our own Minds: And therefore,

AS God, we muſt believe that he is *infinitely wiſe.* Now ſince Wiſdom conſiſts in the Choice and Uſe of proper *Means* for the Accompliſhment of good *Ends*, God, who alone is the *original* Cauſe and Author of all Things, who knows perfectly what each of their Powers and Faculties can produce, and ſees, at one View, their Tendency and Fitneſs to effect the Purpoſes, which he deſigns, can never poſſibly be miſtaken in his *Meaſures*, or come ſhort of a right Judgment upon the *Expediency* of Things. Some faint and imperfect Images of Contrivance and Foreſight may be perceiv'd among ſeveral of his Creatures; and from thence we may learn, that the immenſe Fountain, from which all theſe ſmall Streams do proceed, muſt be poſſeſs'd of theſe Perfections in the higheſt Degree imaginable: For, *if Man be wiſe*, ſays (*f*) *Tully, much more ſhou'd we eſteem God ſo, to whom alone right and ſteady Reaſon, or perfect and abſolute Wiſdom is to be aſcrib'd*; and (*g*) *this do all his wondrous Works declare.* If we conſider his Works of Creation, and (*h*) view this ſtately *Fabrick*, which his Hands have made, we ſtill find, that, from the brighteſt *Star* in the Firmament, to the meaneſt *Pebble* upon the Face of the Earth, there *Wiſdom.*

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* Obſerve how ſenſibly an *Heathen* ſpeaks concerning this. —— *When you ſhut your Doors*, ſays he, *and make it dark within, remember never to ſay, that you are alone; for you are not. Your God and your Conſcience are within; Nor do they ſtand in need of any Light to ſee what you do.* Arrian in Epic. lib. 1. ch. 14.

(*a*) *Clarke's* Ser. Vol. I. (*b*) Jer. xxxii. 19. (*c*) 1 Sam. xvi. 7. (*d*) Acts xv. 18. (*e*) *Lupton's* Serm. (*f*) De Nat. Deor. lib. 2. (*g*) Pſal. lxxv. 1. (*h*) *Clarke's* Ser. Vol. I.

is no Part of Matter, great or ſmall, wherein the Wiſdom of the Creator does not more evidently appear, than the Skill of an Architect is manifeſted by a Building, or the Judgment of an *Artificer* by the Compleatneſs of his Work. But then, if we conſider farther, *(a)* how vaſt the Comprehenſion of that *Providence* muſt be, which takes underneath its Guidance the whole Heavens and the Earth, with all the Things that are therein; which conducts the Motions of the celeſtial *Orbs*, yet without neglecting the meaneſt *Animal*, or *Vegetable* on this inferior *Globe*, and ſo adjuſts all the Parts of the ſtupendous Syſtem, that whatever *Changes* any of them may undergo, their *Correſpondence* to each other is uniformly maintain'd, and the *Harmony* of the Whole: When we conſider theſe, and many more Things, I ſay, that occur in the admirable Oeconomy of the World, we ſhall be forced, with the *Prophet*, to acknowledge (*b*) *that God hath eſtabliſh'd the World by his Wiſdom, and ſtretched out the Heavens by his Diſcretion*; and, with the bleſſed *Apoſtle*, to cry out, (*c*) *O the Depth of the Riches both of the Wiſdom and Knowledge of God, how unſearchable* are the Works of his Hands, and *the Ways* of his Providence *paſt finding out!*

Holineſs. *OF God* we muſt believe that he is a moſt *pure and holy Being*: For, of all his *moral* Attributes, that which comes firſt into our Thoughts, and has indeed the moſt general Direction and Influence over all the reſt, is *Holineſs*, without which Power wou'd become *Oppreſſion*; Wiſdom, *Subtilty*; Dominion, *Tyranny*; Juſtice, *Cruelty*; Mercy, *Weakneſs*, &c. Now, though the Holineſs of God denotes the Purity and Rectitude of his Nature in general, in oppoſition to every Thing, that may not conſiſt with the abſolute Perfection of it; yet, in a more reſtrain'd Senſe, it frequently ſignifies his *eſſential* Love of Virtue, and Hatred of Sin, together with the utter Impoſſibility, that he ſhou'd either be the *Author* of it, or take the leaſt Complacency in it. (*d*) It was indeed the great Unhappineſs, as well as inexcuſable Folly of the Heathens, (at leaſt of many of them) that they honour'd as a Sort of Deities, thoſe Beings (whether real or imaginary) who were of *immoral* Character; ſo that the moſt infamous Vices among them had their *Patrons* among the Gods. But now, in oppoſition to all theſe, we find *Moſes*, in his triumphant Song, crying out, (*e*) *Who is like unto thee, O Lord, among the Gods, who is like thee, glorious in Holineſs!* (*f*) *Thou art of purer Eyes*, ſays the Prophet, *than to behold Evil, and canſt not look upon Iniquity*, otherwiſe than with Deteſtation; for (*g*) *the righteous Lord loveth Righteouſneſs, but the Ungodly, and him, that delighteth in Wickedneſs, doth his Soul abhor.* And therefore,

Juſtice. *AS God*, we muſt believe that he is a moſt *juſt and righteous* Being: For, if it is a certain and undoubted Truth, that all Perfections are eſſential to God, and cannot be ſeparated from the divine Nature; then is it evident, that he, who has all *Knowledge*, to judge of Things, as they really are, all *Power*, to execute *Juſtice* according to that Knowledge, and no poſſible *Temptation* to divert him from it; (*h*) who can neither be impos'd on by any *Deceit*, nor mov'd by any *Biaſs*, nor aw'd by any *Power*; 'tis evident, I ſay, that ſuch a Being will always do what is right, without Iniquity, and without Partiality; without Prejudice, and without Reſpect of Perſons. He has no *Intereſt* of his own to ſerve by Injuſtice. His *Authority* is deriv'd from no ſuperior Power, nor is he accountable to any in the Adminiſtration of it; and therefore of whom can he be afraid, that he ſhou'd *pervert Judgment?* Or whom can he be ſtudious to pleaſe, that he ſhou'd be led away by partial Affection? (*i*) *Is it fit to ſay to a King* (as *Elihu* excellently argues upon this Subject) *thou art wicked? or to Princes, ye are ungodly? How much leſs to condemn him, that is moſt juſt, that accepteth not the Perſons of Princes, nor regardeth the Rich, more than the Poor, for they are all the Work of his Hands?* To condemn him, I ſay, who (*k*) *with Righteouſneſs judging the World, and the People with Equity,* (*l*) *will render to every Man according to his Deeds; to them, who, by patient Continuance in well doing, ſeek for Glory, Honour, and Immortality, eternal Life; but unto them, that obey not the Truth, but obey Unrighteouſneſs, Indignation and Wrath, Tribulation and Anguiſh,*

(*a*) *Abernethy's* Ser. Vol. I. (*b*) Jer. x. 12. (*c*) Rom. xi. 33. (*d*) *Abernethy's* Ser. Vol. II. (*e*) Exod. xv. 11. (*f*) Hab. i. 13. (*g*) Pſal. xi. 7, 5. (*h*) *Clarke's* Ser. Vol. I. (*i*) Job xxxiv. 17, &c. (*k*) Pſal. xcviii. 9. (*l*) Rom. xi. 33.

Anguiſh, upon every Soul of Man that doth evil. For

Truth. *AS God*, we muſt believe that he is a moſt *true and faithful* Being. We indeed, when we prevaricate in our Words, or tranſgreſs againſt Truth in any of our Declarations, are induc'd to do it, either from the Hopes of Advantage, or the Fear of Danger: But the divine Nature is *ſelf-ſufficient*, and can want no Increaſe, nor apprehend any Dimunition. It has no *Superior* without to over-awe it, nor any *Principle* within to decline it from following the eternal Rules of Righteouſneſs, which it has laid down to itſelf, as well as preſcrib'd to its Creatures. Weakneſs of Underſtanding, Corruption of Will, Faultineſs of Intention, Defect in Memory, or Defect in Power, are the uſual Things, which make Men neglective of their Words, and unfaithful to their Promiſes; but none of theſe are incident to God. The eternal *Rectitude* of his Nature, his perfect *Wiſdom*, and clear *Foreſight* of all Events, ſecure him from every malevolent Purpoſe, from all Inconſideration, and Forgetfulneſs, and his Infinite and Irreſiſtible *Power* makes him able to perform whatever has *gone out of his Lips*; ſo that, where-ever we find him *predicting* any thing to come to paſs, *promiſing* any thing to be perform'd, *threatning* any thing to be inflicted, *requiring* any thing to be obſerv'd, or *commanding* any thing to be avoided, we may depend upon it, that he certainly deſigns the Thing predicted ſhall *come to paſs*, the Thing promis'd ſhall be *perform'd*, the Judgment threaten'd ſhall be *inflicted*, the Duty enjoin'd ſhall be *obſerv'd*, and the Sin forbidden ſhall be *avoided*, in the full Purport of the Words, wherein he expreſſes himſelf: For (*a*) *God is not a Man, that he ſhou'd lye, neither the Son of Man, that he ſhou'd repent. Hath he ſaid, and ſhall he not do it? Or hath he ſpoken, and ſhall he not make it good?* (*b*) *For ever, O Lord, thy Word is ſettled in Heaven, and thy Faithfulneſs is unto all Generations, even as thou eſtabliſh'd the Earth, and it abideth.*

Goodneſs. *AS God*, we muſt believe that he is a perfectly *good and gracious* Being: For, as *Goodneſs* in Men is nothing elſe, but a certain Propenſity and Diſpoſition of Mind, whereby a Perſon is inclin'd to deſire, and procure the Happineſs of others; ſo is it evident, that the Supreme Being, whoſe *Underſtanding* can never err in judging what is beſt, whoſe *Will* can never be influenc'd to any wrong Affection, and who *himſelf* is always happy in the Enjoyment of his own Perfections, muſt neceſſarily be poſſeſs'd of that *beneficent* Diſpoſition, which moves him to diffuſe upon all his Creatures, through the immenſe *Univerſe*, and through a boundleſs *Eternity*, every thing, that tends to their true Happineſs; every Good, that either they, in their Nature, are capable to receive, or he, as the wiſe Governor of the World, thinks proper to beſtow. This is that inexhauſtible Fountain of Beneficence, from which the whole Frame of Nature derives its Being; by which all Creatures in the World are continually ſupported and preſerved; and to which Man is indebted for all his preſent Enjoyments and future Hopes. This is that Attribute, which gives a Sweetneſs and Endearment to all the reſt; (*c*) without which Eternity and Immenſity amaze our Thoughts; infinite Knowledge and Wiſdom fill us with Admiration; Almighty Power creates in us Awe and Reverence; Dominion and Majeſty, cloth'd with impartial Juſtice, an anxious Fear and Dread; and perfect Holineſs and Purity, (tho' in their own Nature vaſtly amiable) are of too bright a Glory for Sinners to contemplate with Delight. 'Tis Goodneſs, that finiſhes the Idea of God, and repreſents him to us under the lovely Character of being the *beſt*, as well as the *greateſt* Being in the Univerſe: And for this Reaſon we may obſerve, with what Delight and Complacency it is, that he himſelf proclaims this amiable Name of his, (*d*) *The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long ſuffering, and abundant in Goodneſs and Truth, keeping Mercy for Thouſands, and forgiving Iniquity, and Tranſgreſſion, and Sin.*

Mercy and Patience. I mention but (*e*) two Attributes more, inſeparable from the Divine Nature, and whereof we are all living Monuments, and theſe are, *Mercy*, and *Patience*. Mercy has the *Miſerable*, and Patience the *Sinner* for its Object, and both ariſe from the *Plenitude* of God's Happineſs: For, as the

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(*a*) Numb. xxiii. 19. (*b*) Pſal. cxix. 89, 90. (*c*) *Tillotſon*'s Serm. Vol. II. and *Whitby*'s Serm. on the Attrib. Vol. II. (*d*) Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7. (*e*) That of God's *Incomprehenſibility* I purpoſe to make the Subject of the next *Diſſertation*.

Divine Nature, which abounds with all poſſible Degrees of Perfection, is an everlaſting Fountain of Happineſs to itſelf, and has no Need or Dependance on any thing without, either to continue or augment it; and, as he, who is infinitely happy, can have no Temptation to render others miſerable, but muſt be ſtrongly inclin'd to propagate his own *Likeneſs*, by making the *Miſerable*, in ſome Proportion, happy: It cannot otherwiſe be, but that God muſt needs be tenderly affected with the Miſeries of his own Creatures, and (as far as it is juſt and reaſonable) always ready to ſuccour and relieve them. Sin indeed, as it is a Contradiction to the Purity of his Nature, and Holineſs of his Laws, is frequently ſaid in Scripture to *offend*, and *trouble* and *grieve* him, but this is only ſpoken in *Analogy* to ſuch Reſentments as wou'd ariſe in a good Man's Breaſt upon the View of ſuch Provocations. The Perfection of God's Nature ſets him above all Paſſion, and uneaſy Commotion; nor can the Proſpect of all the Wickedneſs, that is *done under the Sun*, diſcompoſe his Reſt, or, in the leaſt, diſturb that infinite Complacency, which he takes in his own Contemplation. *Patience* therefore muſt be an *eſſential* Property in God; and, as it is an Argument in Men of no common Wiſdom and Strength of Mind, (*For (a) he, that is ſlow to Wrath, is of great Underſtanding, and (b) he, that ruleth his Spirit, better than him that taketh a City)* ſo the *Pſalmiſt* acquaints us, that (*c*) God is *ſtrong and patient, tho' he be provoked every Day.* God is *ſtrong, and therefore patient*; or he is *infinitely patient*, notwithſtanding his Almighty Power to revenge the daily Provocations of his Creatures: And therefore this is his tender *Soliloquy* upon all ſuch Occaſions, *(d) How ſhall I give thee up*, Ephraim? *How ſhall I deliver thee*, Iſrael? *How ſhall I make thee as* Admah? *How ſhall I ſet thee as* Zeboim? *Mine Heart is turned within me; my Repentings are kindled together: I will not execute the Fierceneſs of mine Anger, I will not return to deſtroy* Ephraim, *for I am God, and not Man.*

The OBJECTION.

The Objection. " AND yet, if we look into the ſacred Writings, we ſhall find, that, " by God's *Bowels* of Mercy, his *pitying* " the Miſerable, *grieving* at the Wicked, " and being *jealous* of his Honour; by his " *changing* his Purpoſes, *repenting* of his " Threats, *reverſing* his Decrees, and not " *performing* his Promiſes, (to ſay nothing " of his *Hands*, and *Arms*, and *Eyes*, his " *coming down* from Heaven, and frequently *appearing* in human Shape) By theſe, " and ſeveral other *Affections*, I ſay, we " ſhall find, that the holy Penmen ſeem " to have delineated him in the *Guiſe* and " Similitude of a Man, tho' this is far from " being conſiſtent with what they call, at " other Times, his *Unchangeableneſs*, and " *Spirituality*.* Of his *Spirituality* indeed, " as well as † his other *eſſential* Properties, his *Eternity*, *Immenſity*, and *Self-exiſtence*, his infinite *Power*, boundleſs " *Knowledge*, and univerſal *Inſpection*, we can " form no Manner of Idea; our Minds are " loſt in the Contemplation of them: But " by the little, we can learn from Scripture, " as well as our own Reflection, we may " perceive

(*a*) Prov. xiv. 29. (*b*) Prov. xvi. 32. (*c*) Pſal. vii. 12. (*d*) Hoſ. xi. 8, 9.

* Mr. *Hobbes*, that lofty Pretender to Philoſophy, declares, that to ſay there is any *immaterial Subſtance*, is not ſo much an Error, as it is *Nonſenſe*, and uſing an inſignificant Word, whereby we conceive nothing, but the *Sound*: That to ſay an Angel, or a Spirit is an *incorporeal Subſtance*, is, in effect, to ſay, that there is no Angel or Spirit; and therefore he farther aſſerts, that God himſelf is a moſt pure, ſimple, and corporeal Spirit; and this he defines to be a thin, fluid, tranſparent, and inviſible Body. *Leviath.* Paſſion. But in this he copied after the ancient Atheiſts: For *Plato* tells us of ſome, in his Time, who aſſerted nothing to be Subſtance, but what they cou'd feel; and *Ariſtotle*, of others, in *his*, who affirmed that Matter, or Body, was the only Subſtance; and that all other Things were only Paſſions and Affections of it: And therefore we find *Epicurus* arguing againſt *Plato*, that there can be no *incorporeal* Deity, not only becauſe no Man can frame a Conception of an incorporeal Subſtance, but alſo, whatever is incorporeal muſt needs want Senſe, and Prudence, and Pleaſure, all which Things are included in the Notion of a God; for which Reaſon an incorporeal Deity he calls, a *Contradiction*. *Harris*'s Ser. at *Boyle*'s Lect.

† *We can have*, ſays Mr. *Hobbes*, *no Conception of the Deity, and conſequently, all his Attributes ſignify only our Inability, and Defect of Power to conceive any thing concerning him, except only this, that there is a God.* Human Nat. p. 69.

" perceive, that there are ſome Things, which " ſeem impoſſible for his *Omnipotence* to " do; that ſome trifling Affairs of this " Life are beneath his ſuperlative *Majeſty*; " that ſome natural Impurities in the World " do not comport with his *Ubiquity*; and " that the Notion of his *Preſcience* is in- " compatible with his own Exhortations, " as well as with human *Freedom*. The " *Polytheiſm* of the Gentiles is as ſtrong an " Argument againſt his *Unity*, as the Mi- " ſeries of this Life are againſt his *Goodneſs*; " his (*a*) *creating Evil*, againſt his *Ho-* " *lineſs*; his (*b*) *deceiving the People*, a- " gainſt his *Truth*; the Inequality of Diſ- " tributions, againſt his *Juſtice*; and the " ſudden Infliction of his Judgments, a- " gainſt his *Patience*."

Anſwer'd by ſhewing the Purport of theſe analogical *Expreſſions.*

ALL the Knowledge, we have of Things, ariſes *primarily* from Objects of Senſe; and our Conception of incorporeal Beings we only form, by removing from it what we perceive to be an *Imperfection* in ſuch Objects. Since our Nature however ſeems, by this Means, to be beſt acquainted with what is *corporeal*, and occaſions Senſation in us, 'tis a gracious Condeſcenſion in God, to ſignify the *Operations* of his Divine Majeſty, by a *Similitude* to the Actions, which we perform by our Faculties. When therefore we read in Scripture of God, (who is an infinite Mind) (*c*) *ſitting in Heaven, and making the Earth his Footſtool*, this can be for no other Purpoſe, than to convey to us ſome faint Idea of his ſupreme *Authority* and *Dominion* over all: *His Eyes*, in like manner, are ſet to denote his perfect Knowledge and Diſcernment of all Things; his *looking down upon Earth*, his watchful Providence over all Events; *his Ear*, his Readineſs to hear the Supplications of his Servants; *his Bowels*, the Tenderneſs of his Compaſſion; *his Heart*, the Sincerity of his Affection; his *Hands and Arms*, his irreſiſtible Power and Strength; his *Mouth and Lips*, the Revelation of his Will to Mankind; and *his coming down* to view the State of human Affairs, the Exactneſs of his Juſtneſs and Wiſdom.

That God is void of all Paſſions.

HIS *appearing* indeed in an human Form cannot be called a *figurative* Expreſſion, and is therefore rightly interpreted of *Chriſt*, (*d*) *that Angel of the Covenant*, (*e*) that *viſible Image of the inviſible God*, who, from the Beginning, appearing in a bodily Glory, (*f*) *was with* Moſes *in the Church in the Wilderneſs*, and (*g*) *whoſe Day* Abraham *earneſtly deſired to ſee, and he ſaw it, and was glad*. The Divine Nature itſelf, the *Eſſence* of the Supreme Being, is both *inviſible*, and *impaſſable*; and therefore, (*h*) when we find in Scripture the Paſſions of Pity, Hatred, Anger, or Grief, &c. imputed to God, we are bound to interpret them * in the ſame *figurative* Manner as we do the bodily *Organs* of Senſe or Motion, that are aſcrib'd to him. Theſe Expreſſions

(*a*) Iſa. xlv. 7. (*b*) 1 Kings xxii. 20. Jer. xx. 7. and Ezek. xiv. 9. (*c*) Iſai. lxvi. 1. (*d*) Mal. iii. 1. (*e*) Heb. i. 3. (*f*) Acts vii. 38. (*g*) John viii. 56. (*h*) *Burnet*'s Expoſit. of the 39 Articles.

* I cannot forbear mentioning the Sentiments of a very judicious Author upon this Subject, tho' they ſeem to differ from what I have been induc'd to eſpouſe. His Words are theſe: —— " Becauſe Paſſions are often " occaſion'd by, and are attended with, bodily Commotions, Men are generally cautious how they aſcribe " them to God, as ſeeming to imply ſome Imperfections; and when they do it, 'tis uſually underſtood to be " ſpoken *after the Manner of Men:* Whereas, if they be, as certainly they are, real Motions and Affections " of the *rational* Soul, there can be no doubt, but that there is ſomething in the Nature of God (conſider'd as " a perfect rational Being) *analogous* to theſe Affections in us, tho' infinitely remov'd from theſe Imperfec- " tions, with which they are attended in us; and we may as well refuſe to aſcribe the Faculty of *Knowledge* " to God, becauſe we know by *Ratiocination*, as deny all *rational Affections* in him, becauſe they are excited " in us by *Paſſion*. Our Paſſions indeed, conſider'd rightly, are but the ſeveral *Modifications* of the Will, or " ſo many various *Modes*, or Ways of repreſenting its Operations in the Purſuit of *Good*, or Avoidance of " *Evil*; for, according as any Object appears to the Underſtanding to be good or evil, grateful or ungrateful, " ſo the Will is inclin'd, or averſe to it; embraces, or rejects it: Now this Inclination of the Will to Good " we call *Love*, and the Averſion to Evil, *Hatred*; and, accordingly, as the Good, or the Evil is variouſly " conſider'd, either as *preſent* or *future*, ſo theſe Diſpoſitions of the Will receive various Denominations. But " then we muſt obſerve, that, as there is nothing *future* in God, but all Things are eternally *preſent* to him, " ſo thoſe Affections, which ariſe from Good or Evil, conſider'd as *future*, ſuch as Hope, Deſire, or Fear, " cannot be aſcrib'd to him, any otherwiſe, than in *Condeſcenſion* to our *Weakneſs*, and they muſt be always " underſtood as *ſpoken after the Manner of Men:* But, as for ſuch of them, as relate to a *preſent* Good or " Evil, ſuch as Delight and Joy, Grief and Anger, there is doubtleſs ſomething in the Divine Nature (as I " ſaid) analogous to theſe Operations in us, tho' altogether without our Imperfections. And therefore, as " we *love* what appears *good* to us, with a ſenſitive Complacency, ſo God has ſuch a Diſpoſition to all Good, " as to take a rational Pleaſure in it: And tho' God cannot be ſaid to *grieve*, or to be *angry*, as they imply a *Diſ-*

preſſions indeed are *analogical* Repreſentations of his Conduct, as Governor of the World, towards his Creatures: And therefore, when, in the Iſſues of his *Providence*, there ſeems to be ſuch a *Vehemence*, as, (according to the Manner of Men) wou'd import a *Paſſion*, then that Paſſion is aſcrib'd to him. Thus, when he chaſtiſes Men for their Sins, he is ſaid to be *angry*; when he does it with ſevere and redoubled Strokes, he is ſaid to be *full of Fury* and Revenge; when he puniſhes for *Idolatry*, or any Diſhonour done to himſelf, he is ſaid to be *jealous*; when his Judgments come *ſlowly* from him, he is ſaid *to have Bowels*; and when he changes the Courſe of his Proceedings, he is ſaid to *repent*: But, in all theſe Inſtances, we ſhou'd be far from thinking, that there are any ſuch Emotions in his moſt bleſſed and perfect Mind. (*a*) For a little Reflection will ſoon convince us, that ſuch Paſſions ſhew the Imperfection of our State, and a Mixture of Unhappineſs in it, and therefore they cannot poſſibly affect the infinite *Self-ſufficiency*, the undiſturb'd Reſt and perfect Felicity of the ſupreme independent Being.

And unchangeable *in his Purpoſes.*

THE Scriptures aſſure us, that (*b*) *the Counſel of the Lord ſhall endure for ever, and the Thoughts of his Heart from Generation to Generation*; and the Reaſon is, (*c*) becauſe the entire *Scheme* of his Adminiſtration was form'd from all Eternity, and the whole Extent of *Futurity* was, at once, in his View, ſo that nothing can happen *unexpected*, nothing *new*, that can ſurprize him, or make any Alteration in his Meaſures. Here however we muſt make a Diſtinction, *viz.* that (*d*) thoſe Declarations of the Deſigns and Purpoſes of God, which are *prophetick* of the great Events of Providence, are in themſelves *abſolutely* fix'd, and unalterable, becauſe the Wiſdom of God cou'd not poſſibly be deceiv'd in his *original* Deſign, and Intention of appointing them; but thoſe Promiſes or Threats, which are merely *perſonal*, either to any particular Man, or to any Number of Men, (how abſolute ſo ever they ſeem to be expreſs'd) are always to be look'd upon as *conditional*, becauſe the Wiſdom of God thought fit to make *theſe* to depend on the Behaviour of Men; and his *Immutability*, with regard to them, does not conſiſt in the *Unalterableneſs* of the *Things* themſelves, but in the *Unchangeableneſs* of the *Condition*, upon which they are ſuſpended.

The Change is on Man's Part.

To this Purpoſe we find God, by the Mouth of his Prophet, declaring, —— (*e*) *When I ſay to the Righteous, that he ſhall ſurely live If he truſt to his own Righteouſneſs; and commit Iniquity, all his Righteouſneſs ſhall not be remember'd; for his Iniquity, that he hath committed, he ſhall die. Again, when I ſay unto the Wicked, thou ſhalt ſurely die; if he turn from his Sin, and walk in the Statutes of Life, without committing Iniquity, he ſhall ſurely live, he ſhall not die:* From whence it is evident, that the *Promiſes*, made by God to righteous Perſons, are only made to them, *not turning away from their Righteouſneſs to commit Iniquity*, and the *Evils*, threaten'd to the Wicked, are only threaten'd to them, *not turning away from their Iniquity, to do that which is lawful and right:* From whence it will follow again, that, when the Promiſes of God to the Righteous are not *perform'd*, or the Threatnings, denounc'd againſt the Wicked, are not *executed*, this does not happen, thro' any Change in God, but only thro' a Change in Man. For the *Promiſe* only fails, becauſe they, to whom it is made, ceaſed to be the *proper Objects* of it, by ceaſing to be the ſame *righteous Perſons* they were before; and the *Evil* threaten'd is revers'd, becauſe they ceaſe to be the *Impenitent Sinners* they were before, and ſo ceaſe to be the *proper Objects* of theſe Threats. In ſhort, God's Affection towards Good and Evil, towards Virtue and Vice, is therefore *uniform* and *unchangeable*, becauſe his Promiſes and Threatnings invariably follow theſe *Diſpoſitions*, through all the Changes of Man's *perſonal* Behaviour: And (*g*) as the ſame Fire, with one unwearied Action, conſumes combuſtible Matter, but refines and purifies Gold; ſo God, without any Change or Alteration in himſelf, puniſhes the Wicked, when they ſo continue, and ſhews Compaſſion to the

" a *Diſcompoſure*, and Diſturbance in us, yet there is doubtleſs ſuch an *Averſion* to all *Evil* in the Divine Mind, " as do produce, in his Operations, ſuch Effects, as are the Tokens of thoſe Paſſions in us. There is a real " Diſlike, tho' without Diſorder: There is a rational Motion, tho' without Diſturbance. *Burnet*'s Ser. at *Boyle*'s Lect.

(*a*) *Abernethy*'s Ser. Vol. I. (*b*) Pſal. xxxiii. 11. (*c*) *Abernethy*'s Ser. Vol. I. (*d*) *Clarke*'s Ser. Vol. I. (*e*) Ezek. xxxiii. 13, &c. (*f*) *Whitby*'s Ser. on the Attrib. Vol. I. (*g*) *Clarke*'s Ser. Vol. I.

the ſame Perſons, when they become truly and ſincerely penitent.

That we can form ſome imperfect Notions of the Divine Attributes.

WE acknowledge indeed that the *eſſential* and incommunicable Attributes of God, to our weak and finite Underſtandings, are inſcrutable. We cannot form any adequate Conception of them: But then we have the leſs Reaſon to be concern'd at this, becauſe we are at an equal, if not a greater Loſs, in our Contemplation of any *corporeal* Subſtance. Its *Accidents* are all that we are acquainted with; its *Eſſence* and internal Conſtitution quite eſcape us: But now, by the *Cogitation*, *Will*, and ſpontaneous Motion, which we cannot but perceive in our own Minds, (bating for their manifold Imperfections) we are led, in ſome meaſure, to the Notion of God's *Spirituality*. By our Souls pervading the whole Syſtem of the Matter, they inhabit, taking Care of all, and governing its moſt diſtant Members, we have an *Emblem* given us of his *Immenſity*. By the *Activity* inherent in us, which enables us not only to produce ſome Effects within our Minds, but alſo to move the Members of our Bodies, and by them to move others, we find ſome Reſemblance of his *Omnipotence*. By our own *Underſtanding*, eagerly purſuing Knowledge, being highly delighted with it, and ambitious ſtill to acquire more, we are, in ſome Degree, put in Mind of his *Omniſcience*. By our *Ability* to dart our Eye from Earth to Heaven in a Trice; to contemplate every Object in its Paſſage, and to raiſe our Imagination beyond the Limits of all created Subſtances, we may frame ſome Idea of his *univerſal Inſpection*; and by our own *Exiſtence*, were it not of ſo momentary a Duration, (were it not ſo dependent on the Will of him, *in whom we live, move, and have our Being*) we might reaſon better concerning his *Self-exiſtence* and *Eternity*. Thus, by abſtracting the *Defects*, that adhere to our Nature, and by enlarging and multiplying the Notions, we have of our own Minds and Faculties, we may be led to a weak and diſtant Similitude of the great and eſſential Attributes of God; (*a*) even as a Man, who had liv'd, all his Life long, in ſome dark *Cave*, and never ſeen any Light, but that of a *Candle*, upon his being told of a vaſt *refulgent* Body, which, at a great Diſtance from us, enlightens more than half of this Globe at one and the ſame Time, might, from the Notion he had of a Candle, form to himſelf a tolerable Idea of that moſt glorious Luminary, the *Sun*.

Miſtakes about God's Omnipotence.

IT is to be obſerv'd however, that we groſly miſtake God's *Omnipotence*, when we think it can extend to the working of any Thing that implies a *Contradiction*, or Imperfection in himſelf; to any Thing, that is inconſiſtent with his Wiſdom, or the *moral* Rectitude or Goodneſs of his Nature; or to any Thing, * that is contrary to his *Word* or Promiſe, whereby he has reſtrain'd himſelf in the Execution of his Power: That we miſtake his *Omnipreſence*, when we ſuppoſe, *Omnipreſence.* that his immediate *Inſpection* is employ'd about Matters of the higheſt Importance only, leaving the leſſer Affairs to inferior Agents; whereas, (*b*) it is an higher Perfection to comprehend a great *Multitude* of Things, ſo as to beſtow a neceſſary Care upon them, without neglecting any, and the higheſt Perfection of all, to comprehend the whole *Univerſe* at once, and to diſpoſe of every, the moſt minute Thing, without Perplexity or Confuſion: That we miſtake the *Purity* of his Nature, when *Purity.* we imagine that he can be *affected* by any *natural Uncleanneſs* of Things or Places; for, (*c*) whereas all the *ſenſible Qualities* of Matter are merely *relative* to us, in our preſent State, and depend upon the Frame of our bodily *Organs*; it is the ſuperlative Excellence, and Prerogative of his Nature, to act always upon all Things every where, and himſelf to be acted upon by nothing; (*d*) even as the *Rays* of the Sun, which ſhine upon the Dunghill, as well as the Palace, receive no Filth or Pollution from either; and that we miſtake the divine *Preſcience*, when we account it in- *And Preſcience* compatible either with his own Exhortations, or Man's Liberty of acting; becauſe *Fore-knowledge* has not the leaſt Influence upon the Nature of Things, to make any *Alteration* in them. Whether *Events* be neceſſary or contingent, fix'd or voluntary, they are foreknown, juſt as they are in themſelves, nor has the divine *Preſcience* any

(*a*) *Johnſon*'s Diſc. and Diffr. Vol. I.

* Thus, tho' God has once drowned the World, and therefore muſt have ſufficient Power to do ſo again yet we may ſay, *he cannot do it*, becauſe he ſtands engag'd by ſolemn Covenant, *Gen.* ix. 11. never to drown it any more; and this is that *Impoſſibility*, which the Apoſtle ſpeaks of, when he ſaith, *that God continueth faithful, he cannot deny himſelf.* Heb. vi. 18. *Whitby's* Ser. on the Attrib. Vol. I.

(*b*) *Abernethy*'s Ser. Vol. I. (*c*) *Clarke*'s Ser. Vol I. (*d*) *Whitby* on the Attrib. Vol. I.

Manner of *Cauſality* in the Production of them. God's Judgment of future free Actions, we allow, is infallible; but then this puts no more * Force, or Biaſs upon the Agent himſelf, than the *Conjecture*, which a Man, who knows thoroughly the Temper and Diſpoſition of another, makes, what that *other* will do upon any particular Occaſion: And from hence it will follow, that, if the Fore-knowledge of God has no Manner of Influence upon our Actions, his *Admonitions*, *Exhortations*, and Motives to us to turn and repent, and thereby ſave our Souls, can never be *impertinent*, unſeaſonable, or deluſory, ſince they are Motives and Exhortations only to do that, which he plainly perceives we may *freely* do.

Heathen Polytheiſm *no valid Objection againſt the* Unity *of God.*

BEFORE the Coming of *Chriſtianity*, 'tis granted that Mankind was ſtrangely infected with *Idolatry*, and the Multitude of their Deities, in Heaven, in Earth, and other Regions of the World, was almoſt innumerable: But whoever looks into their Authors, will perceive, † that the wiſeſt Part of them (at leaſt) acknowledg'd but one God, whom they conſtantly call'd the *greateſt*, and *beſt* of Beings, the wiſe Creator and Governor of the Univerſe; and that the different *Names*, which they ſo liberally beſtow'd upon him, did not ſignify *diſtinct* Beings, but only *partial* Conſiderations of this Supreme Deity, as manifeſting himſelf by his various Works. (*a*) The vaſt *Multitude* of Creatures indeed, which are every where produc'd, and the numberleſs *Variety* of Appearances in the World, tho' all proceeding from the ſame original Cauſe, might give *weak* Minds occaſion to imagine a *Diverſity* of operating and governing *Principles*; yet others really meant, and expreſs'd themſelves as meaning no more, than a Diverſity of *Effects*. And therefore, tho' the *Pagan* Worſhip might ſeem, at firſt Sight, to be divided between the *Divinity* preſiding in the Heavens, in the Sun, the Moon, the Air, the Earth, the Sea, and the inviſible State of ſeparated Spirits; yet the wiſer Sort intended it to the one *Supreme* God, to whoſe Dominion the whole World is ſubject; whom they believ'd to be every where preſent, *pervading all Things* (as they expreſs'd themſelves) and diffuſing the Fruits of his Power, Wiſdom, and Liberality, thro' all the Parts of the Univerſe.

Nor worldly Miſeries *againſt his Goodneſs.*

AGAINST the *Goodneſs* of God then the Miſeries of this Life can be no valid Objection: For, beſides that theſe Miſeries are very frequently the Fruits of our own Doings, the Effects of abus'd Plenty, or the Reſult of a Life led in Luxury, and are not therefore to be charg'd upon our Maker; all the Afflictions, that are *providentially* ſent upon us, are intended, either for the Prevention of Sin, the Increaſe of our Virtue here, or the Augmentation of our Glory hereafter; and, having this good Tendency, they muſt not be attributed to a *malevolent* Deſign, but rather to the Appointment of a tender and compaſſionate Father. For, ſuch is our preſent Infirmity, and ſo liable are we to various Temptations, eſpecially in a State of Eaſe and Proſperity, that very few, in that Condition, are able to maintain their Integrity uncorrupted; and therefore, to excite their Vigilance, and guard them againſt the Approaches of Sin, to abate their Reliſh of inferior Gratifications, and to put them upon the Purſuit of the more *ſolid* Satisfaction, which ariſes from the Practice of Virtue, divine Corrections are frequently diſpens'd

* To illuſtrate this by a plain Inſtance. When Chriſt reveal'd to his Diſciples, that *Judas* ſhou'd *betray him*, they muſt have a *Fore-knowledge*, that he wou'd do ſo, as certain and infallible, as that of God; and yet 'tis evident, that their Fore-knowledge, that he wou'd do ſo, had no *Influence* upon his doing it: And from theſe Words of Chriſt, *the Son of Man goeth, as it is written of him, but Woe to that Man, by whom he is betray'd; it had been good for him that he had not been born.* Mat. xxvi. 28. it plainly follows, that the *Fredi&tion*, and ſo the *Preſcience* of the Event, that *Jeſus* ſhou'd be thus betrayed by the Treachery of *Judas*, did lay on *Judas* no antecedent *Neceſſity* of doing that Action, becauſe it did not leſſen the *Woe*, that was due unto him for it; and therefore it only ſuppoſes a Fore-knowledge in God, how the Will of Man, left to its own Freedom, will determine or incline itſelf. *Whitby* on the Attributes.

† The ancient *Chriſtians*, who vindicated this Attribute of the Deity againſt the heathen *Idolaters*, us'd to alledge the *Opinion* of the beſt and wiſeſt Men among them, as no mean Argument. This they did from *Orpheus*, from *Sophocles*, from *Heſiod*, from *Socrates*, and ſeveral others: And (not to enter into a Detail of Citations from them) we may obſerve, that it is the general Remark of thoſe, that are moſt converſant in their Writings, that, when they ſpeak *ſtrictly* of the Deity, they conſtantly uſe the Word *God*, as we Chriſtians do, in the *ſingular* Number, but, when they mention the Word *Gods*, they only accommodate themſelves to the Language and Capacity of the *Vulgar*: So that, unleſs we eſteem the vulgar Opinion equal to the Doctrine of the moſt wiſe and learned in all Ages, we have the Teſtimony of *heathen* Antiquity on our Side for the Unity of the Divine Nature. *Nichols*'s Comment. on the Articles.

(*a*) *Abernethy*'s Ser. Vol. I.

diſpens'd by a Providence *mercifully* ſevere: For, (*a*) *tho' no chaſtning for the preſent, ſeemeth to be joyous, but grievous, nevertheleſs, afterward, it yieldeth the peaceable Fruit of Righteouſneſs unto them, that are exercis'd thereby.* (*b*) *Equanimity* in all the Changes of their outward Condition; *Patience* under Sufferings of divers Kinds, and long Continuance; *Reſignation* to the Will of the ſupreme, wiſe, and righteous Governor of the World; an unſhaken *Confidence* in him, and *Reliance* on his Goodneſs; a rational *Contempt* of the Vanities of this Life, and an ardent *Aſpiration* after the bleſſed Enjoyment of God and Heaven; theſe are the Fruits, which wiſe Men reap from their Afflictions, enough to ſilence all Complaints, eſpecially when (*c*) *the Trial of their Faith, being much more precious than that of Gold, which periſheth, ſhall be found unto Praiſe, and Honour, and Glory, at the Appearing of Jeſus Chriſt.*

God not the Author of Sin.

AGAINST the *Holineſs* of God, his being ſaid *to create Evil*, is a weak Allegation: For, if we conſider the Occaſion of God's expreſſing himſelf in that Manner, we ſhall find, that it is not the Evil of *Sin* or Wickedneſs, but the Evil of *Calamity* or Affliction, the ſad Concomitant of God's Vengeance upon the Reprobate, that he intends by it. God is here comforting the *Jewiſh* Church with a Promiſe of Safety and Security, under the Protection of *Cyrus*. To enable *Cyrus* to do this, he aſſures them, that he (*d*) *will looſen the Loins of Kings, will break in Pieces the Gates of Braſs, and cut in ſunder the Bars of Iron*; in other Words, that he will deſtroy the Kingdom of *Babylon*, the great Oppreſſor of *Iſrael*: Whereupon, (in a few Verſes after) it follows, *I form the Light, and create Darkneſs; I make Peace, and create Evil*; but then, we are to underſtand this, not of *Evil*, as it reſpects *Sin* or Iniquity (in which the Divine Nature can have no Concern) but of Evil, as it relates to *Puniſhment*, *viz.* the Smart and Pain, which ariſe from the Sufferings and Calamities of the Wicked. For, if God were the *Creator* of Evil in the former Senſe, (*e*) how wou'd it conſiſt with his Sincerity, his Veracity, and, I may add, his Juſtice likewiſe, to puniſh us for complying with his own *Ordinances?* Where he the Author of Sin, he cannot act *ſincerely*, in profeſſing an Abhorrence and Deteſtation of it. His *Veracity* may juſtly be queſtion'd, when he threatens to puniſh us for complying with that *Evil*, which he himſelf introduc'd, and ſet before us; nor can he, in *Juſtice* ſentence us to Death, for giving Way to ſinful Motions implanted in our Nature, and interwoven with our Conſtitution by his own immediate Operation, and yet, *ſhall not the Judge of all the Earth do right?*

Nor any Dealer in Deceit, *as appears by the Inſtances alledg'd.*

AGAINST the *Veracity* of God indeed, his *deceiving his People* may ſeem to be a proper Exception, until we come to explain the Paſſages, which may be ſuſpected of that Meaning. In the Caſe of the *evil Spirits* undertaking (*f*) to perſuade *Ahab* to go upon an Expedition, in which he was to be ſlain, we are to obſerve, that the whole Narrative is not to be underſtood *literally*, (*g*) but only as a *Viſion*, or *parabolical* Repreſentation of God's Providence, in ordering Matters ſo, that *Ahab* ſhou'd fall at *Ramoth-Gilead*. For, doubtleſs, there was no ſuch *Conſultation* before God, who ſhou'd be employed in this Work, as (*h*) is repreſented; no ſuch *Enquiry*, on God's Part, how the lying Spirit wou'd execute it, as (*i*) is ſuggeſted; and therefore no ſuch *Command* of God as follows, (*k*) *go forth and do ſo:* But the Purpoſe of all this is only to inſtruct us, that God, having determin'd to deſtroy *Ahab* for his Wickedneſs and Idolatry, permitted *Satan* to ſtir up his Prophets to propheſy according to his Inclinations, that he, giving Credit to them, might follow their Advice, and periſh.

WHEN God commiſſion'd *Jeremiah* to propheſy againſt the People of *Jeruſalem*, he gave him this Aſſurance of his Protection, (*l*) *I will make thee, this Day, a defenced City, and an Iron Pillar, and Brazen Walls againſt the whole Land, againſt the Kings of* Judah, *againſt the Princes thereof*, &c. *and they ſhall fight againſt thee, but they ſhall not prevail; for I am with thee, ſaith the Lord, to deliver thee.* Upon this Preſumption the Prophet expected, that, in the Execution of his Office, he ſhou'd meet with no Oppoſition or ill Treatment; but when, contrary to this, he found himſelf cruelly us'd, (*m*) *put in the Stocks* by the

(*a*) Heb. xii. 11. (*b*) *Abernethy*'s Ser. Vol. I. (*c*) 1 Pet. i. 7. (*d*) Iſai. xlv. 1, 2. (*e*) *Stephens*'s Ser. Vol. 2. (*f*) 1 Kings xxii. 19. (*g*) *Whitby* upon the Attrib. Vol. II. (*h*) 1 Kings xxii. 20. (*i*) Ver. 22. (*k*) Ibid. (*l*) Jer. i. 18, 19. (*m*) Chap. xx. 2.

the chief Governor of the Temple, and expos'd to the Contempt and Deriſion of the People; in his Paſſion and Peeviſhneſs, he breaks out into this Expreſſion, (*a*) *Thou haſt deceived me, and I was deceived*: But * the Meaning of this is no more, than (*b*) that he had miſtaken the Promiſe of God to him, who, when he gave him his *Commiſſion*, engag'd to *ſupport* him in it, but never aſſur'd him of a *total* Exemption from Perſecution, as the Prophet vainly imagin'd.

'Tis a known *Hebraiſm* in Scripture (*c*) to expreſs Things in an *active* Form, which are to be underſtood only *permiſſively*, in which Senſe that Paſſage in *Ezekiel*, (*d*) *I the Lord have deceived that Prophet*, is to be taken, *i. e.* I have permitted him to be deceiv'd, and to deceive the People, as a juſt Judgment upon them, *for* (*e*) *their ſeparating themſelves from me, and ſetting up their Idols in their Hearts:* For this is the plain Senſe of what he had threaten'd above, *I will take the Houſe of* Iſrael *in their own Heart, becauſe they are eſtranged from me through their Idols*, *i. e.* becauſe they have choſen to themſelves *falſe Gods*, I will ſuffer them to be deluded by *falſe Prophets*.

Preſent Inequalities *no Objection againſt God's* Juſtice.

AGAINST the *Juſtice* of God the Inequality of his preſent Diſtributions is a common, but not ſo formidable a Plea: For, upon Suppoſition, that Mankind are under a State of Trial and Probation here, it ſeems unreaſonable, that the Divine Providence ſhou'd continually be interpoſing itſelf to proportion Rewards and Puniſhments according to their Deſervings. 'Tis more conſiſtent with his Wiſdom, that he ſhou'd exerciſe the Graces and Virtues of good Men with Afflictions and Sufferings, and permit bad Men to take their Courſe for awhile, without ſending his Judgments upon them, as oft' as they offend. We *walk by Faith*, ſays the Apoſtle, and look for (*f*) *the Revelation of that righteous Judgment*, which will ſet all Things ſtraight, that now ſeem to be crooked and perplex'd. In the Name of God then, let his *Sun ſhine at* preſent, and *his Rain deſcend upon the Wicked*, as well as *the Righteous*, yet (*g*) if he will afterwards make an eternal Difference between them, and *horrible ſhall be the End of the Unrighteous*, whereas the Fruits of Piety ſhall be *everlaſting Peace*; this is ſufficient, one wou'd think, to convince us, that the Wicked can have no Cauſe to boaſt, that their Puniſhment has been ſo long *delay'd*, nor the Righteous to complain, that their Reward came *ſo late*.

Nor ſudden Judgments *againſt his* Patience.

AGAINST the *Patience* of God, in like manner, the *ſudden Infliction* of his Judgments upon ſome particular Perſons, is but a weak Allegation: For, beſides that the Examples of this Kind are very *few*, tho' the daily Provocations of Sinners be ſo heinous, and ſo numerous, God, in this Caſe, is to be conſider'd, as acting in the Capacity of a righteous *Governor*, and not an indulgent *Parent*. Now, as the chief Reaſons, why wiſe and good Governors on Earth uſe Severity in the Adminiſtration of Juſtice, are, either to deter others from the like Offences, or to preſerve the Authority of the Laws, which they have enacted; ſo, whenever God is induc'd to be quick in the Execution of his Puniſhments upon the Sinner, 'tis always to ſerve ſome wiſe End of his Government. Thus he puniſhed *Lot*'s Wife, (*h*) by turning her inſtantly into a *Pillar of Salt*, (*i. e.* a ſtanding Monument of the Fruit of her Diſobedience) even when he was, in ſo ſignal a Manner, taking care of her. Thus he puniſh'd the Man, (*i*) who *gather'd Sticks on the Sabbath-Day*, as the firſt Breaker of the Law, which he had given the *Jews*, for the Obſervation of the *Sabbath*, in Commemoration of his being the World's *Creator*; and thus he (*k*) puniſh'd *Nadab* and *Abihu* for tranſgreſſing the Precept *of offering no other Fire, than what was taken from the Altar*, almoſt as ſoon as it was given; for (*l*) *I will be ſanctified, ſaith the Lord, of all them that come nigh me, and before all the People, I will be glorified, viz.* in my Judgments on them, who do not revere my Commands. In a word, the very Nature of Patience and Long-ſuffering ſuppoſes, that they will not always laſt,

(*a*) Jer. xx. 7.

* Some very good Expoſitors are of Opinion, that, what we tranſlate, *thou haſt deceived me, and I was deceived*, may very properly be render'd, *thou haſt perſuaded me*, viz. to take the Office of a Prophet upon me, *and I was perſuaded:* For the *Hebrew* Word PATHAH (from which the *Greek* PEITHO ſeems plainly to be deriv'd) is a *middle* Word, (as they ſpeak) and ſignifies to *perſuade to Good*, as well as to *Evil*. *Whitby* on the Attrib. Vol. II.

(*b*) *Tillotſon*'s Ser. Vol. II. (*c*) *Tillotſon*, ibid. (*d*) Chap. xiv. 9. (*e*) Ver. 7. (*f*) Rom. ii. 5. (*g*) *Whitby* on the Attrib. Vol. II. (*h*) Gen. xix. 26. (*i*) Numb. xv. 32, &c. (*k*) Lev. x. 1. (*l*) Ver. 3.

laſt, but that Puniſhment, tho' it comes ſlowly after the Sinner, will certainly, in Time, overtake him; and therefore, to conclude with the good Advice of the wiſe Son of *Syrach*; (*a*) *Say not thou, I have ſinned, and what harm hath happened unto me? For the Lord is long ſuffering, he will in no wiſe let thee go; and ſay not, his Mercy is great, he will be pacified for the Multitude of my Sins; for Mercy and Wrath come from him, and his Indignation reſteth upon Sinners.*

DISSERTATION II.

Of the Incomprehenſibleneſs of GOD.

The Knowledge of God, an important Subject.

OF all religious Subjects, there is none, that affects our *Intereſts*, and conſequently deſerves our *Attention* more, than that of the Divine Nature and Perfections: For, if the Doctrine concerning God and his Attributes be true; if there really is ſuch a Being, infinite and eternal, our Maker, Preſerver, and ſupreme Lord; if we have to do with him in ſo many *Capacities*, and ſuch a Variety of Obligations to him run through the whole Compaſs of our Exiſtence, both in this Life, and in that which is to come; nothing can be more manifeſt, than that *this* claims our Regard and Application, preferable to all other Subjects: And yet, upon Experiment, it will be found, that human Reaſon is incompetent for the Work; that the Divine Nature and Excellencies are *unſearchable*; and (*b*) *the Knowledge thereof too wonderful for us, we cannot attain unto it.*

In what Senſe we cannot comprehend him.

Now, to remove this Diſcouragement, we muſt obſerve, that, (*c*) when we ſay that God is *incomprehenſible*, the Meaning is not, that we have no *manner* of Idea at all of that abſolutely perfect, and independent Being; but only that, tho' we have a *diſtinct* Notion of ſuch a Being, and convincing Proofs of his Exiſtence, yet we do not *fully* underſtand the Wonders of his Nature, and the Extent of his Perfections; for between *fully* underſtanding the Nature of a Thing, and having a clear Perception of its *Exiſtence*, there is a wide Difference. Our Senſes perceive the *exterior* Face of corporeal Things, that they are round or ſquare, black or white, hard or ſoft, &c. But the *internal* Conſtitution, upon which theſe Properties depend, no human Underſtanding can find out: And, in like manner, our Reaſon convinces us of the Exiſtence and Perfections of God, diſcover'd by their Effects in the Creation, Preſervation, and Government of the World; but (*d*) to meaſure the Length of his *Eternity*, the Breadth and Expanſions of his *Immenſity*, the Height of his *Preſcience*, the Depths of his *Decrees*, and, laſt of all, that unutterable, incomprehenſible *Myſtery* of two *Natures* united in one *Perſon*, and again, of one and the ſame Nature diffus'd into a *triple Perſonality*; this we are no more able to do, than (*e*) *to mete out the Heavens with a Span, or to meaſure the Waters in the Hollow of our Hand:* Which is every whit as poſſible a Suppoſition, as to *circumſcribe* God, who is boundleſs in his *Eſſence*, wonderful in his *Actings*, inconceivable in his *Purpoſes*, and inexpreſſible in his *Attributes*, (*f*) in the narrow Limits of our Thoughts, or to bring that, which, in its own Nature, is *infinite*, within the Compaſs of what is *finite*.

Nor Works of Nature.

(*g*) THE Soul indeed was naturally deſigned for Knowledge, and it ſtill retains an impatient Thirſt and Deſire after it; but then it is ſo clouded and darken'd by its Union with the Body, that it fares with the *Underſtanding*, as it does with the *Eye*; it can only look upon the Outſide of Things; it cannot penetrate into their hidden and imperceptible *Eſſence*. And if our Faculties do not enable us to know the *intimate* Nature of the meaneſt *Inſect*, or even the moſt contemptible *Pebble*, or to perceive the Reaſon of its *Gravity* and *Coheſion*, how can we pretend, *by ſearching, to find out* the original Cauſe of all Things, or to *underſtand the Almighty to Perfection?*

Our Ignorance of theſe.

WHERE then is the Wiſe, where is the Scribe, the proud Philoſopher, and bold *Theoriſt*, the Maker of Worlds, and Meaſurer of Heaven, that we may aſk him, (*h*) *Hath the Rain a Father, or who hath begotten the Drops of Dew? Out of whoſe Womb came the Ice, and the hoary*

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(*a*) Eccleſ. v. 4, 6. (*b*) Pſal. cxxxix. 6. (*c*) *Abernethy's* Ser. Vol. II. (*d*) *South's* Ser. Vol. III.
(*e*) Iſa. xl. 12. (*f*) *Tillotſon's* Ser. Vol. II. (*g*) *Coney's* Ser. (*h*) Job xxxviii. 28, 29.

hoary Froſt of Heaven, who hath engender'd it? And if theſe Things, which are ſo obvious to thy Senſes, are ſo puzzling to thy Underſtanding, *(a) What wou'dſt thou anſwer me, ſhou'd I aſk thee, how great Dwellings are in the Midſt of the Sea, and how many Springs are in the Beginning of the Deep?* Shou'd I aſk thee concerning the Situation of the Sun, or the Influence of the Moon, or the Order of the Stars, or the *Balancing of the Clouds?* Shou'd I aſk thee, *(b) whereupon hath God faſten'd the Foundations of the Univerſe, and who laid the Corner-ſtone thereof? How he hath made the Clouds the Garment of the Sea, and thick Darkneſs the Swaddling-bands of it?* And yet *(c) theſe are but Parts of his Ways, how little a Portion is heard of him in all this, and the Thunder of his Power who can underſtand.*

Of God's Eſſence. WHAT then ſhall we ſay, if we proceed in our Enquiry, and enter upon the *Philoſophy* of the Divine Nature? *(d)* That *God is a Spirit*, is a Truth deliver'd to us in Scripture, and ſupported by the higheſt Authority of Reaſon; but then, how to account for all the Properties of a Spirit in general, and how to frame a perfect Idea of the *Spirituality* of God, is what baffles, and confounds all our reaſoning Faculties: For *(e) touching the Almighty we cannot find him out*; *(f) behold he is great, and we know him not*; *(g) he is excellent in Power, and in Judgment, and he reſpecteth not any, that are wiſe of Heart.*

His Attributes. Of Eternity. WHAT ſhall we ſay, if we enter upon the Conſideration of his *Eternity?* We form an Idea of *Duration*, from obſerving a *Succeſſion* in our Thoughts, and attending to the regular *Motion* of ſome Bodies; but of what Uſe is the Meaſure of Days and Nights, the Revolutions of heavenly Bodies, and the Riſing and Setting of the Sun, to give us any Notion of that great Being, *who was God from everlaſting, and World without End*, even *(h) before the Mountains were brought forth, or ever the Heavens and the Earth were made?* We, when we argue about *Body*, and *Space*, have no Notion how one *Individual* ſhould exiſt in ſeveral Places at the ſame Time, or indeed in one ſingle Place, without Circumſcription, or *Immenſity.* menſuration; and yet, in reflecting upon God's *Immenſity*, we muſt allow it; for who ſhall encloſe that boundleſs Being, *(i) whom the Heaven, and the Heaven of Heavens cannot contain, who maketh the Clouds his Chariot, (k) and the Earth his Foot-ſtool, (l) his Ways in the Sea, and his Paths in the great Waters?*

Omniſcience. WHAT ſhall we ſay, when we enter upon the Conſideration of his *Omniſcience*, *(m)* who, by one ſingle Act of *Intuition*, penetrates, and runs over all Objects, and, with one clear View, ſees through the *Windings* of Time, and the *Lengths* of Eternity, and contemplates what is *paſt* and *gone*, as well as what is *preſent* and *future*, what is *contingent* and *accidental*, as well as what is *free* or *neceſſary*? For *(n) he looketh to the Ends of the Earth, and ſeeth under the whole Heaven*; he *(o) revealeth the deep and ſecret Things*; *he knoweth what is Darkneſs, and the Light dwelleth with him.*

Omnipotence. WHAT ſhall we ſay, laſtly, when we enter upon the Conſideration of that *Almighty Power*, *(p) which*, at firſt, *laid the Foundations of the Earth, and ſtretched the Line upon it*; *which*, at preſent, *(q) bindeth up the Waters in his thick Clouds, and the Cloud is not rent under them*; *which*, at pleaſure, *(r) removeth the Mountains, and overturneth them in his Anger*; *which ſhaketh the Earth out of her Place, and cauſes the Pillars thereof to tremble*; for, if the Effects themſelves tranſcend our Knowledge (as they evidently do) how can it be expected, that we ſhould be able to comprehend the Power of the Cauſe?

And his Providence. THAT God governs the World with unerring *Wiſdom*, which, at firſt, he made by his Almighty *Power*, is a Truth obvious to Reaſon, and confirmed by Experience: Yet it would be Preſumption to aſſign the *Grounds*, upon which infinite Wiſdom acts, and to reſolve the Difficulties, that reſult from all Events. *(s)* 'Tis our great Happineſs, that, in this imperfect State, we know enough, both of the Works of Nature, and the Works of Providence, to ſerve all the wiſe Ends and Purpoſes of Living; and, though ſome Things may ſeem a little intricate and perplexed, our Conſolation is, that in the next

(a) Eſd. iv. 7. (b) Job. xxxviii. 6, 9. (c) Job xxvi. 14. (d) *Coney's* Ser. (e) Job xxxvii. 23. (f) Job xxxvi. 26. (g) Job xxxvii. 23, 24. (h) Pſal. xc. 2. (i) 2 Chr. vi. 8. (k) Iſai. lxvi. 1. (l) Pſal. lxxviii. 19. (m) *Coney's* Ser. (n) Job xxviii. 24. (o) Dan. ii. 22. (p) Job xxxviii. 4, 5. (q) Job xxvi. 8. (r) Job ix. 5, 6. (s) *Sherlock* on Providence.

next Life, (a) there remains a Proſpect to be open'd, which, like the laſt *Act* of a well-wrote *Tragedy*, will adjuſt, to the Satisfaction of each *Spectator*, whatever appeared irregular, or unaccountable in the ſeveral Parts of the preceding *Drama*: So that, altho', with Regard to our Apprehenſions of God, and his Dealings with us in our preſent State, (b) *Clouds* and *Darkneſs* are juſtly ſaid to be *round about him*, yet we may be ſure, that, in the Concluſion, *Righteouſneſs and Judgment* will appear to have ever been *the Habitation of his Seat*.

THUS, which way ſoever we contemplate this Infinite Being, whether in his Operations, his Eſſence, his Attributes, or his Providence, we find abundant Reaſon to cry out with the Prophet, (c) *Verily thou art a God that hideſt thyſelf*. The more we ſearch, the more we marvel; and the longer we meditate, the plainer we perceive, that our ſhallow Comprehenſion can be no *Standard* to the divine Eſſence and Perfections.

Human Knowledge limited by God.

THE Truth is, God has ſet *Bounds* to our Underſtandings, and confined them to ſuch *Limits*, as they cannot paſs. (d) He has given us ſuch a Knowledge of *Corporeal* Things, as may render them uſeful to us in Life; but their *internal* Natures, and *occult Qualities* he hath hid entirely from our Sight. We are conſcious to ourſelves, that we think, reaſon, and deliberate, &c. and this is enough to diſtinguiſh our *Species*, and make us beneficial in our Generation: But how theſe Operations are perform'd; how far our *animal*, as well as our *ſpiritual* Part is concern'd in them, and in what Part of the Body the *Elaboratory* of the Mind is ſeated, with all our ſtudious Obſervation we cannot find out. And, in like manner, our Knowledge of God and his Attributes is ſufficient to inſtruct us in our ſeveral Duties towards him, and to qualify us for the Part aſſign'd us in the Creation: But, as our Capacities, in the preſent State, are not fitted for the full Comprehenſion of any *created* Being, we need not think it ſtrange, that *uncreated* Eſſence and Perfections ſhould infinitely tranſcend the Conceptions of the moſt exalted human Mind.

The Pleaſure of divine Contemplation.

WE muſt remember, however, that the Difficulty of this Subject ariſes from its peculiar *Excellency*, and that the true Reaſon, why we cannot comprehend God, is the *Tranſcendency* of his Perfection, which, inſtead of abating, ſhould increaſe our affectionate Regard to him, and ſtrongly incite us to make his Wiſdom, and Power, and Goodneſs, ſo conſpicuous in the Works of Creation, and Providence, the Matter of our daily Contemplation and Study. The Eye of the Body is limited in its Operation, and its Sight confined to ſuch a Space, or Proportion of Diſtance; and yet an *endleſs Proſpect*, we find, gives an high Delectation: And, in like manner, it cannot but afford ſome Pleaſure to a *finite* Underſtanding, to view *unlimited* Excellencies, that have no *Shore* or *Bounds*, though it cannot comprehend them. (e) There is a Pleaſure in *Admiration*, and what cauſes Admiration is properly this, — when, in an *Object*, that we know to be excellent, we diſcover a great deal, and yet, beyond that, perceive we know not how much more, which, if we make the Trial never ſo often, our Underſtandings cannot reach.

And yet contented we ſhould be with the little we do know.

IN a word, whilſt we ſojourn in this *Valley of Darkneſs*, it is impoſſible that we ſhou'd approach to *Light inacceſſible*. Contented we muſt be to know only *in Part*, and to ſee *through a Glaſs darkly*. Whatever Diſcoveries, God hath been pleas'd to make of himſelf in his holy Scriptures, we are thankfully to embrace, and ſtedfaſtly to believe, without being too curious or *critical* in our Expoſitions of them. (f) Our Happineſs does not conſiſt in explaining *Myſteries*, but in keeping the *Commandments*; not in diſputing nicely about the *Trinity*, and adjuſting the Difference between *Preſcience*, and Predeſtination, but in worſhipping the *Trinity in Unity*, in believing the Divine *Omniſcience*, and in ſubmitting quietly to the Decrees of God: And therefore (to conclude with the wholſome Advice of the wiſe Son of *Syrach*) (g) *Seek not out the Things, that are too hard for thee, neither ſearch the Things, that are above thy Strength, but what is commanded think thereupon with Reverence; for it is not needful for thee to ſee with thine Eyes the Things that are in ſecret. Be not curious in unneceſſary Matters, for more Things are ſhewn unto thee, than Men underſtand.*

SECT.

(a) *Marſhall's* Ser. Vol. I. (b) Pſal. xcii. 7. (c) Iſa. xlv. 15. (d) *Abernethy's* Ser. Vol. II.
(e) *Tillotſon's* Serm. Vol. I. (f) *Coney's* Ser. (g) Eccleſ. iii. 21, &c.

SECT. III. * The FATHER.

The EXPOSITION.

God called the Father.

AFTER the Confeſſion of the *Being* and *Exiſtence* of God, and the various *Attributes*, which conſtitute the divine *Nature*, our *Creed* very properly reminds us of the *Relation*, wherein he ſtands towards us, and all the World, and of the *particular Manner* of his *Subſiſtence*, according to the *OEconomy* of the *everbleſſed Trinity*: For he is called the FATHER, as he is the Author and Giver of Life to all intelligent Beings in the Univerſe, and therefore Angels are called *(a) his Sons*, and Men *(b) his Offspring*, and, in a moſt ſuperlative Manner, he is ſtiled ſo, as he is the Father of his eternal Son, our Lord, and Saviour *Jeſus Chriſt*.

As the Giver of Life to Angels.

WE indeed who *(c) dwell in Houſes of Clay, whoſe Foundation is in the Duſt*, can have but a ſlender Conception of the *Powers* and *Faculties* of thoſe *celeſtial* Beings, whoſe Abode is neareſt the Throne of God's Preſence, and whoſe Nature partakes moſt amply of the *Image* of his Perfections: But, in the holy Scriptures we are taught, that by Nature *(d) they are Spirits*, i. e. free from the Cloud and Impediment of groſs *Matter*; and therefore, in their *underſtanding Faculties*, muſt needs be piercing, and comprehenſive, and for that Reaſon are called *(e) the Eyes of the Lord, which run to and fro through the whole Earth*; in their *active Powers*, *(f)* are ſtrong, quick, and penetrating, as the Wind, as the Flame of Fire, as the Lightning, ſo that *(g)* no *Reſiſtance* of material Bodies can hinder their Paſſage or Motion; no *(h) Darkneſs* or Covert can obſtruct their Sight and Intuition; and, in the *Compaſs of their Operations*, as they can form and aſſume Bodies to themſelves, ſo can they reſtrain, *(i)* and ſuſpend the natural Agency of all Bodies; can † differently affect our animal *Spirits*; can excite and influence our inward *Senſes*; and, by the Mediation of our Fancies, approach and act upon our very *Souls*: And therefore, upon the Score of theſe excellent Powers, which thou haſt given them, *(k) Thou, even thou art Lord alone, thou haſt made Heaven, the Heaven of Heavens,*

* The Author of *The Critical Hiſtory of the Apoſtles Creed* is of Opinion, that the Word *Father* was inſerted in it, in Oppoſition to the *Gnoſticks*, and other *Hereticks*, who fondly imagin'd, that the *ſupreme* God liv'd in a limited Space, (call'd *Pleroma)* in a State of idle and unactive Eaſe, and that another *inferior* Deity (to whom they gave the Title of *Father)* was the *Creator* of the World, and the Author of every Thing, that is in it. But this is the ſame Error, which ſeems to run through his whole Performance, *viz.* that few, or no *Articles* were compos'd by the Apoſtles themſelves, but by ſucceeding Rulers in the Church, as they ſaw *Hereſies* ariſe, and more *explicit* Declarations of Faith became neceſſary: Whereas the main Deſign of all *Creeds*, and indeed of the *Chriſtian* Revelation itſelf, was, to eſtabliſh the Doctrine of the *Trinity*, or the Subſiſtence of three diſtinct *Perſons* in one and the ſame *Godhead*, and *to make all Men ſee* (as the Apoſtle expreſſes it) *what is the Fellowſhip of the Myſtery, which, before the Beginning of the World, has been hid in God*, Eph. iii. 8. Now, of theſe three divine Perſons, the *firſt* was always called *the Father*, not only becauſe he is the *original* Cauſe, and Giver of Life to all intelligent Beings, and *of whom the whole Family in Heaven and Earth is named*, Eph. iii. 15. but, more eſpecially, becauſe he is *the Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, who is *the expreſs Image of his Perſon*, and whom, in the next Article, we profeſs to be *his Son*. In ſhort, the Sum and Subſtance of the Chriſtian Religion, as it is diſtinguiſh'd from others, is this ——That the *Saviour*, in whom we truſt, is really and truly (tho' in an *ineffable* Manner) the *Son* of the moſt high *God*, who himſelf is deriv'd from none, made of none, begotten of none, proceeding from none, *&c.* And therefore the Title of *Father* could not, at firſt, be inſerted in the *Creed*, in order to oppoſe the growing Hereſy of the *Gnoſticks*, but muſt *originally* have been an *eſſential* Branch of the Chriſtian Faith, and profeſſed by the *Jew* and *Gentile* Converts, ever ſince the Time that our Lord teſtified of himſelf, *I aſcend to my Father, and your Father, and to my God, and your God*, John xx. 17. *Wake* and *Clarke* on the Ch. Catechiſm, and *Pearſon* on the Creed.

(a) Job xxxviii. 7. (b) Acts xvii. 28. (c) Job iv. 19. (d) Heb. i. 14. (e) 2 Chron. xvi. 9. (f.) *Young*'s Ser. Vol. II. (g) Acts xii. 10. (h) Gen. xviii. 12, 13. (i) Dan. iii. 27.

† Thus we read of *Daniel* (Chap. x.) that, after an awful *Touch* of the Angel had quite *enervated* him, and brought him to a *Deliquium*, another Touch of the ſame Hand *ſtrengthen'd* him again, *i. e.* reſtor'd his Spirits to their former Motion and Vigour. In like manner, the Caſe of *Saul*, and other *Demoniacks*, ſeems to be this, That *evil* Angels did, at certain Times, diſturb their *animal Spirits*, and run them into deſperate *Melancholies*: Nor have we any Reaſon to doubt, but that *good* Angels are as ready and able to exhilerate the Spirits of the *Righteous*, to ſupport them in their religious *Labours*, to ſtrengthen them in their *Sufferings*, and even ſometimes to ſuſpend their *Senſe* of Pain in the midſt of *Tortures*. *Young*'s Ser. Vol. II.

(k) Neh. ix. 6.

Heavens, with all their Hoſt, the Earth, and all Things that are therein, the Sea, and all that is therein, and thou preſerveſt them all; and the Hoſt of Heaven (which can only be meant of the Angels above) *worſhippeth thee.*

And Men. IN like manner, we find the devout *Pſalmiſt* making a grateful Acknowlegment of the Divine Care and Superintendency, both in the *Formation*, and *Preſervation* of his Being: *(a) Through thee have I been holden up, ever ſince I was born; thou art he, that took me out of my Mother's Womb; my Praiſe ſhall be always of thee. Wonderful* indeed is the Make of our Body: But, ſuppoſe we cou'd account for the juſt *Symmetry* of its Parts, their admirable *Subſerviency* to each other, and the incomparable *Beauty* and Elegancy of the Whole; ſuppoſe we cou'd trace it from its firſt Beginning to its Growth and Perfection, and fix in our Minds a clear and diſtinct Idea of the ſeveral Steps, by which it riſes to the *full Meaſure of its Stature*; yet (*b*) what ſhall we ſay to that other *Principle*, whereof we are compos'd, our *Soul?* For what is it, that, thro' the *Door* of our Senſes, can *let in* upon us ſuch a beauteous *Imagery* of the manifold Works of God? What is it, that enables us to travel through the *Univerſe* with a few Glances of Meditation, and can carry us beyond all bodily and outward Impreſſions, even to ſuperior Intelligences, and to God, the *Father of Spirits?* And again, how this Principle of Thought (whatever it be) ſhou'd enter into ſo ſtrict an *Alliance* with a *Subſtance*, that ſeems little related to it; how it ſhou'd depend upon the *Changes* and Viciſſitudes of our Bodies, and exert itſelf, more or leſs, according to the Temperature of its *Vehicle*; how the one ſhou'd appear to riſe or fall, to grow or decay with the other, when there is no viſible *Bond* of Connection between them: Theſe are Circumſtances, which add ſtill more to the Wonders of our Compoſition; which ſhew that our Being aroſe gradually under the *plaſtick* Hand of our great Creator; that our *earthy* Parents had the leaſt Share in its Formation and Growth; and that, in every Child, that is born into the World, God continues the ſame Operation, which he did to the *firſt* of the Species, when *(c) he breathed into his Noſtrils the Breath of Life, and Man became a living Soul.*

Adopts *us into his Family.* BUT, beſides the Right of Creation, God has a farther Title to be called the *Father*, eſpecially of us *Chriſtians*, by Right of *Adoption. (d)* Now Adoption is an Act of *Favour*, whereby the *Maſter* of an Eſtate takes Perſons of another Stock, and receives them as his own Children. Theſe Perſons, if *Slaves* before, are immediately ſet *free*, and ſo take the Name, and ſucceed to the Inheritance of the *Adopter*. A Method this, contriv'd for the Continuance of Names, Support of Families, and Conſolation of thoſe, to whom either Nature hath denied, or whom Death hath depriv'd of an Offſpring: But there is this Difference in the Caſe, that the *Adoption*, to which we are admitted, is no Advantage at all to God, but intirely our *own*; and therefore the more marvellous that Act of *Grace*, in ſuffering Wretches, who before were *Aliens* and *Strangers*, nay, *Slaves* to the Enemy of Mankind, and ſold under Sin, to be firſt ſet at *Liberty*, and then taken into ſo near a Relation to him, *(e) of whom the whole Family in Heaven and Earth is nam'd*, as to excite the Apoſtle to cry out, *(f) Behold what Manner of Love the Father hath beſtowed upon us, that we ſhou'd be called the Sons of God*; and *(g) if Sons, then Heirs, Heirs of God, and joint Heirs with Chriſt!* Therefore *(h) bleſſed be the God, and Father of our Lord* Jeſus Chriſt, *who, according to his abundant Mercy, hath begotten us again into a lively Hope, by the Reſurrection of* Jeſus *from the Dead, to an Inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reſerved in Heaven for us.*

And is the eternal Father of Chriſt. NAY, beſides all this, there is a ſtill more *eminent* and peculiar Senſe, wherein God is ſtiled *the Father*, and that is in Relation to our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt*, who, in the ſubſequent Articles, is called *his only Son*; not in reſpect of *(i)* his miraculous *Conception* in the Womb of a Virgin, by the Virtue and Operation of his Divine Spirit; not in reſpect of that *Authority*, wherewith God inveſted him, and gives others, upon whom it was conferred, *(k)* the Characters of *Gods*; not in reſpect of his *Reſurrection* from the Dead, whereby he was *(l)* inſtated in a *new immortal* Life, and made *Heir of all Things* in his Father's Houſe; but in Reſpect of that ineffable *Generation*, whereby he communicated to him the *Fulneſs* of his Divine Eſſence.

The Nature of that Generation, *whereby he was ſo.* WE call it *Generation*, and we think we are

(*a*) Pſal. lxxi. 6. (*b*) *Marſhall's* Ser. Vol. I. and *Pearſon's* Expoſ. of the Creed. (*c*) Gen. ii. 7. (*d*) *Stanhope's* Ep. and Goſp. Vol. I. (*e*) Eph. iii. 15. (*f*) 1 John iii. 1. (*g*) Ep. viii. 17. (*h*) 1 Pet. i. 3, 4. (*i*) Mat. i. 20. (*k*) John xx. 35, 36. (*l*) Acts xiii. 32, 33.

are authoris'd by Scripture (which ſtiles him *God's Son*, his *beloved Son*, his only *begotten Son*, &c.) to make uſe of that Expreſſion; but then, by this *Term* we do not intend a Proceeding from *Non-exiſtence* to Exiſtence, which is the *phyſical* Notion of Generation; nor muſt we underſtand it in that *low* Senſe, in which it belongs to *Creatures*; but as it is conſiſtent with the *eſſential* Attributes of God, whereof *neceſſary Exiſtence* is one. In this Generation likewiſe we are not to ſuppoſe any *Diviſion* of Eſſence, or any external *Separation*, as there is in *finite* Beings: For, tho' the Son be generated from the *Subſtance* of the Father, and thence becomes a Perſon *diſtinct* from him; yet he ſtill continues to be *in the Father, and the Father in him*, contrary to the Nature of all other Productions, where the *Producer*, and the *Produced* become two diſtinct *Individuals*, which in this *Generation* cannot be.

We may obſerve of this Generation farther, that though, in Virtue of it, there were given to the Son all the Attributes and Perfections, which do *ſimply* and abſolutely belong to the Divine Nature, ſo that the Son is *eternal*, *omniſcient*, *omnipotent*, *&c.* in the ſame Manner, as is the Father; tho' all the *natural* Properties, I ſay, by this Generation were communicated to the Son; yet the *perſonal* Properties of the Father (ſuch as the Act of *communicating* the Eſſence, the *Generation* itſelf, and the perſonal *Pre-eminence* of the Father founded upon that Generation) were not communicated to him, becauſe they are *proper* and *peculiar* to the Father, and indeed *inſeparable* from his *Character*, as ſuch.

Once more, concerning this Generation we may obſerve, that the Communication of the Divine Eſſence to the Son was not a *temporal* one, but ſtrictly and abſolutely *eternal*; that God did not, ſome Time before he determin'd to make the World, beget this Son of his, with a Deſign to employ him, as his Hand and Inſtrument, in the Work of Creation: But that he begot him from *Eternity*, in the ſame Senſe, in which Eternity is aſcrib'd to the Divine Nature, and in the ſame Senſe, in which God the Father himſelf is ſaid to be *eternal*. And the Reaſon hereof is plain, becauſe, if God communicated to his Son his full and entire *Eſſence*, with his Eſſence he muſt neceſſarily communicate (as we ſaid before) all his *eſſential* Attributes, whereof *Eternity* is one of the Chief; becauſe it is irreconcileable, how the Son ſhou'd have the Divine Nature in common with the Father, and yet want any of its eſſential *Properties*; nor is it conceivable, *(a)* how a Perſon, who is not eternal himſelf, can, without a manifeſt Contradiction, be ſtrictly and properly ſaid to be of the *ſame Eſſence* with another, who is eternal, and of whoſe Eſſence that *Eternity* muſt, of Neceſſity, be a *principal Character*.

God truly and ſtrictly a Father.

And hence it follows, that, if God be the *eternal* Father of an eternal Son, the Title of *Father* more properly belongs to him, than to any *created* Being; for, *(b)* ſince the State of human Relations is ſo *fluctuating*, that he, who To-day is a Son, may To-morrow prove a Father, and, in the Space of one Day more, by the Death of *him*, who begot him, and of *him*, who was begotten by him, may become neither Son nor Father; * there is none in Reality a *true* Father, but God, who is a Father without Beginning, and without End, who, is always a Father, and has always a Son, *(c) in whom dwelleth all the Fulneſs of the Godhead bodily*. And this, by the Bye, is a farther Character and Confirmation of God's being a true Father: *(d)*

" For, if we call thoſe Fathers upon Earth,
" whoſe Sons ſeem to reſemble them in
" ſome *Features*, or Lines of *Similitude*,
" tho', with that Similitude, many acci-
" dental *Diſparities* may intermix; how
" much more properly may that Appella-
" tion belong to him, who hath begotten
" a Son, of a Nature and Eſſence *ſo totally*
" *alike*, ſo *totally the ſame*, that no acci-
" dental Diſparity can, in the leaſt, con-
" ſiſt with that *Identity?*

(a) Clarke's Script. Doct. *(b) Pearſon's* Expoſ. of the Creed.

* *Fauſtinus*, in his Treatiſe againſt *Arius*, tell us, *that God only is properly a true Father, becauſe he always was a Father, and always will be; for he never began to be a Father, but is always a Father, having always a Son begotten of him. But as for us (ſays* Gregory Nazianzen) *we can properly be call'd by neither Name, becauſe we are both Fathers and Sons, not one, more than the other; and being born, not of* one, *but* two *Parents, we are diviſible*, &c. *Nichols's* Comment. on the Ch. Art.

(c) Eph. ii. 9. *(d) Pearſon's* Expoſ. of the Creed.

The

The OBJECTION.

" BUT, if the Communication of the " Divine Nature from the Father to " the Son be ſo full and integrate, as to " make them *totally alike*, *totally the ſame*; " how comes it to paſs, that, for ſo many " Ages of the World, we never heard one " Tittle of all this? The *Jews* were God's " favourite and peculiar People: (*a*) *To " them pertained the Adoption, and the Glory, " and the Covenants, the Giving of the Law, " the Service of God, and the Promiſes*; " and yet, in all the *Revelations*, which " he vouchſafed to that Nation, he never " gave the leaſt Intimation of his having " a *Son*, in the Senſe that is now contended " for; but, inſtead of that, *Line upon Line*, " and *Precept upon Precept*, concerning the " *Singularity* and *Unity* of the Godhead, " which, upon the Suppoſition of a Com- " munication of the Divinity to others, are " in great Danger of being infring'd. How " often do we read of the Almighty's being " *the one God, the true God, the only true " God*, &c? How ſolemnly do we hear " him declaring, *I am the firſt, and I am " the laſt*, and, *beſides me, there is no God? " ——Is there any God beſides me? Yea, " there is no God, I know not of any:* And " yet, if he, from all Eternity, had a Son " of the ſame Nature and Subſtance with " himſelf, why ſhou'd he labour to con- " ceal it? Or if this Son be eſſentially the " ſame with the Father, what ſhall we ſay " for that *Superiority*, we uſually aſcribe " to the *latter*, and that Preference, which " we always give him in our Prayers and " Addreſſes, both publick and private? (*b*) " *Do not I fill Heaven and Earth, ſaith " the Lord*, and am not I the Centre of " my own Happineſs? And therefore, to " beget a Being *co-equal* and *co-eſſential* with " himſelf is not ſo eaſy a Conception, as " to produce one of an *inferior* Rank and " Order, that might be ſubject to him, " and ſubſervient to his Will and Pleaſure, " which wou'd certainly better account " for the *different* Repreſentations made of " Chriſt in Scripture, and render vain and " uſeleſs all that *Jargon* of the *Schools*, about " *Mode, Eſſence, Subſtance, Subſiſtence, Per- " ſonality*, and ſuch a *Paternity* and *Filia- " tion*, as no mortal Man can rightly under- " ſtand."

Anſwer'd, by ſhewing that the Nature of the divine Generation *is* incomprehenſible.

No *mortal Man*, we acknowledge, can form a proper Notion of the Nature of God, much leſs of the *Manner* how the Son was *generated*, or how three *Perſonalities* ſubſiſt in one and the ſame *Godhead*. (*c*) Our Ideas muſt needs be defective, when the aweful and *tremenduous* Eſſence of the Deity, is the Matter of our Enquiry: For, ſince we cannot make out the *Philoſophy* of our own Exiſtence, or account for the *Union* of Soul and Body, (two *Subſtances*, but one *Perſon*) how can it be expected, that we ſhou'd be able to penetrate into the deep *Myſtery* of two *diſtinct* Perſons, yet one *undivided* Subſtance, in a Subject infinitely remov'd beyond the narrow Ken of human Underſtanding? Whoever looks into the Writings of the *New Teſtament*, will ſoon perceive, that Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt are all dignified with the ſame infinite *Perfections* of Wiſdom, Power, Knowledge, *&c.* and inveſted with the ſame *eſſential* Attributes, and thence he muſt infer, that they have all the ſame *Eſſence*; and finding beſides, that they have *perſonal Properties*, and diſtinct *Offices* and *Relations*, he muſt, in like manner, conclude, that they are diſtinct *Perſons:* But then, how that Divine Eſſence did, from everlaſting, *emanate*, and flow into three *ſocial* and *co-eternal Subſiſtences*, or, in what particular *matyphyſical* Manner, the Father, who is the original *Fountain* of the Godhead, did communicate the ſame *Fulneſs* of it, that he has in himſelf, to his only Son, which is called *Generation*, and the ſame Fulneſs of it to the *holy Spirit* likewiſe, which is called *Proceſſion*; or why, in the one Caſe, it ſhou'd be * called *Generation*, and, in the other,

(*a*) Rom. ix. 14. (*b*) Jer. xxiii. 21. (*c*) *Seed*'s Ser. Vol. II.

* " We had not known any Thing, either of the *Generation* of the Son, or of the *Proceſſion* of the Spirit, " had they not been reveal'd to us in the Word of God; and, becauſe the Difference of *Proceſſia* from *Gene- " ration* is not there reveal'd, we muſt be contented not to know it, and muſt think it *unneceſſary*, if not " *unbecoming* to enquire about it. Had not God deſign'd that we ſhould know and believe that the Son " is *not* the Holy Ghoſt, and that the Holy Ghoſt is *not* the Son, we may be aſſur'd, that no ſuch *Difference*, " as this, would have been mentioned in thoſe ſacred Writings, which were intended to be the *Rule of our " Faith*; and had God deſign'd that we ſhould know the preciſe Difference between the *Origination* of the " Son,

other, *Proceſſion*, this is the great and unſearchable Myſtery, which the Scripture has no where reveal'd, nor God oblig'd us to underſtand. What we are requir'd indeed to ſearch into, is this: — Whether the Doctrine be deliver'd in plain *Propoſitions*; and, when we have ſatisfied ourſelves in that, "We have nothing elſe to do (as a (*a*) "great Divine expreſſes it) but to believe; "and, ſince we cannot *ſcientifically* com- "prehend the Thing, to worſhip it with "the Religion of *Submiſſion* and *Wonder*, "and, caſting down our Reaſon before it, "receive it with the Devotions of *Silence*, "and the humble Diſtances of *Adora-* "*tion*."

Why metaphyſical *Terms were introduc'd into this Argument.*

When we write, or diſcourſe about theſe *abſtruſe* Subjects, we think ourſelves concern'd to keep cloſe to the *Scripture* Expreſſions, and, in Matters of ſuch nice Importance, to deviate, as little as poſſible, from the ſacred Language; and, if we have been ſometimes oblig'd, in our *Vindication* of the Truth, to turn aſide from this ſtrait Path, on them light the Shame, who have compelled us to it. In the Debates of Divinity, (*b*) *Hereticks* were the Perſons, who firſt introduc'd their dark *ſcholaſtick* Terms, in order to perplex the Queſtion with *metaphyſical* Quirks and *Subtilties*, and then the *Catholicks* were neceſſitated to follow them through all their Mazes and Windings, to ſhew that their *Tenets* were impregnable, and wou'd abide the Teſt. Not only ſo, but when their Adverſaries began to pervert the plain Meaning of the Scriptures, the *Orthodox* found themſelves oblig'd to adopt *new Terms*, and * ſuch as comprehended the whole Senſe of the *controverted* Paſſage, in order to *antidote* their Poiſon: But this was ſo far from being any Injury to the Divine *Oracles*, that it was † the beſt Means of providing for their *Security*, (*c*) and the only Way to vindicate them from the falſe *Gloſſes*, and unnatural Interpretations, which Men of perverſe Minds were wont to put upon them, for the *Seduction* of the Ignorant, and the *Subverſion* of the Chriſtian Faith.

What Notice the Jews *might have of God's Paternity.*

We grant indeed, that, in the *Jewiſh* Diſpenſation, the *Divine Filiation* was a Doctrine, which, in a great meaſure, laid abſcond; and yet we cannot ſee, how any Imputation can fall upon God for reſerving ſome Diſcoveries to himſelf, until his Son's Manifeſtation in the Fleſh, when, taking upon him the *prophetick* Office, he ſhou'd (*d*) *make all Men ſee* (as the *Apoſtle* expreſſes it) *what is the Fellowſhip of the Myſtery, which, from the Beginning of the World, hath been hid in God, to the Intent that now, unto the Principalities and Powers in heavenly Places might be known, by the Church, the manifold Wiſdom of God.* The Revelation

"Son, and of the Holy Ghoſt, we cannot doubt, but that, in the ſame Scriptures, this alſo would have been "*plainly* deliver'd. We are told indeed by ſome, who pretend to have div'd into the *Depth* of theſe *Myſteries*, "that the Differ ence between the *Generation* of the Son, and the *Proceſſion* of the Holy Ghoſt is the ſame, "as that between the two *Faculties* of our own Souls, our *Underſtanding*, and our *Will*, ſo that the Son "iſſues from the Father, as *Wiſdom* doth from the *Mind*, who is therefore called the *Wiſdom of God*; and that "the Holy Ghoſt proceeds from *the Father and Son*, as an Act of *Love* does from a *wiſe Mind*, who is there- "fore ſtiled (in the Writings of the Learned, and thought to be called alſo in the Scriptures) *the Love of God*: "But ſince the Scriptures have not taught us any ſuch *Diſcrimination*, we may be ſatisfied that it can be "no *eſſential* Article of the Chriſtian Faith. *Smalridge*'s Ser.

(*a*) *South*'s Ser. Vol. IV. (*b*) *Seed*'s Ser. Vol. II. and *Waterland*'s Import. of the Trinity.

* The moſt remarkable of this Kind is the Word *Conſubſtantial*, or of the ſame Subſtance, which occaſion'd great Diſputes and Altercations at the Council of *Nice*, where the *Arians* objected againſt it, as being an *unſcriptural* Word; but the true Reaſon was, its being too *hard* to be digeſted, and too *full* and ſignificant, to be perverted into any other Senſe. It no where occurs in Scripture indeed; yet it is a neceſſary Conſequence of our Lord's Divinity. For, if he be God, (as the Scripture every where teſtifies) and not of the ſame individual *Subſtance* or Eſſence with God the Father, it will neceſſarily follow, either that there are more Gods than one, or that he is a God in an *inferior* and *ſubordinate* Senſe; and therefore it was neceſſary to inſiſt upon this *Term*, in order to baffle the Evaſions of theſe deceitful *Hereticks*, who, by ſome *Subterfuge* or Reſervation, were able to diſtinguiſh away the Senſe of any other Word, that could be invented to expreſs the *Divinity* of our Saviour. *Trap*'s Doct. of the Trinity, and *Moſs*'s Ser. Vol. III.

† At the Council of *Nice*, the *Catholick* Fathers had, at firſt, deſign'd to draw up a *Summary* of their Faith in ſuch Scripture Terms, as were univerſally acknowledg'd and receiv'd, and the *Arians* were as ready to ſubſcribe it, with a *Reſerve* of their own *diſtorted* Meaning; by which Slight they *deluded*, or, at leaſt, *delayed* the *Synod* for a while, till at laſt, they were confounded by the one comprehenſive Term *Conſubſtantial*, which did, at once, fully and clearly expreſs all that had been declared before in other Words. It is to be obſerv'd however, that the *Biſhops*, at this *Council*, were not the firſt *Coiners* of it, but received it from their *Predeceſſors*, becauſe it had been uſed by ancient Writers, both at *Rome* and *Alexandria*, almoſt *an hundred and twenty* Years before, in the Refutation of thoſe, who made the Son of God to be a *Creature*, *Moſs*'s Ser. Vol. III. from Theod. Eccl. Hiſt. lib. I. ch. 8.

(*c*) *Moſs*'s Ser. Vol. III. (*d*) Eph. iii. 9, 10.

lation vouchſafed the *Jews*, I ſay, was, in this Reſpect, vaſtly imperfect; and yet we may obſerve, that, tho' God all along took care to guard and ſecure the *Divine Unity*, yet, at the ſame Time, he gave his People plain Intimations, that there was at leaſt another *Perſon*, equal to himſelf (and therefore call'd by the incommunicable Name JEHOVAH) ſubſiſting in the Godhead. For when he gives this ſolemn Charge to the *Iſraelites*, (a) *Behold, I ſend an Angel before thee, to keep thee in the Way, and to bring thee into the Place, which I have prepared; beware of him, and obey his Voice; provoke him not, for he will not pardon your Tranſgreſſions, for my Name, i. e.* my Nature, *is in him:* When *David* makes this humble Acknowledgment, (b) *Thou Lord, in the Beginning, haſt laid the Foundation of the Earth, and the Heavens are the Work of thy Hands; they ſhall periſh, but thou ſhalt endure; they all ſhall wax old, as doth a Garment, — but thou art the ſame, and thy Years do not fail:* When *Solomon* introduces *Wiſdom* thus uttering herſelf; (c) *The Lord poſſeſſed me in the Beginning of his Way, before the Works of old, — when he prepared the Heavens, — when he eſtabliſh'd the Clouds above, — when he gave to the Sea his Decree, — when he appointed the Foundations of the Earth, then I was by him, as one brought up with him, and I was daily his Delight*: The whole Current of Interpreters, both *Jewiſh* and *Chriſtian*, have referr'd theſe Paſſages to the Divine *Logos*, or eternal Son of God.

WITHOUT troubling ourſelves then with a (d) Multitude of *Teſtimonies*, which have been gathered from *Philo*, the *Chaldee Paraphraſts*, and other Authors of great Eſteem among the *Jews*, or with various *Examples* of *Hebrew* Expreſſions, where the *Noun* and *Verb*, being of different Numbers, may be thought to intimate ſome kind of *Plurality* in the Divine Nature; we may ſafely conclude, that the *Jews* of old wanted not Information of this Kind, tho' not ſo plain and explicit, as what we now have; but that, as the Diſcoveries of this Doctrine grew fuller and clearer by a gradual Increaſe, according as the Time of Chriſt's coming made nearer Approaches, they anſwer'd, as the *Apoſtle* expreſſes it, the Purpoſe of a *Lamp*, (e) *that ſhineth in a dark Place, until the Day dawn'd, and the Day Star aroſe*, (f) *to give the Light of the Knowledge of the Glory of God in the Face of* Jeſus Chriſt.

The Deſign of Chriſtianity was to reveal the Doctrine of the Trinity.

THE principal End and Deſign of *Chriſtianity* indeed, as it is a new Religion grafted upon the *Jewiſh*, was to let Mankind into the *Myſtery* of *three* Perſons in the *Unity* of the Godhead, and to teach them to pay diſtinct Honour and Worſhip to each Perſon, according to their diſtinct *Names*, *Characters*, and *Offices*. (g) *Tertullian* ſeems to be of this Opinion, when he tells us, that, to believe in one God, in ſuch a Senſe, as to exclude the Son, and the Holy Ghoſt, is reverting to *Judaiſm*. "For what other Difference of any Mo-" ment, *ſays he*, is there between us, " and them? What do we owe peculiar " to the Goſpel? What has the New Teſ-" tament (which tells us (h) *the Law and* " *the Prophets were until* John) added, of " ſuch mighty Importance, were it not " that, from the Time of it, *Father, Son,* " *and Holy Ghoſt* are believ'd to be *three* " diſtinct Perſons, and to be *one God?* God " was pleas'd to introduce a new *Diſ-*" *penſation*, for the Sake of a new *Faith* " in the one God, as comprehending the " Son, and the Holy Ghoſt, that God might " now be clearly repreſented under diſtinct " *Names*, and *Perſonalities*, who had in-" deed before been *manifeſted*, but not ſo " *diſtinctly*, in the Son, and Holy Ghoſt." Theſe are the Sentiments of that Father, which appear to be not only *juſt*, ((i) as one obſerves) but *noble* and *elevated*, and apt to raiſe in our Minds Ideas ſuitable to the *Majeſty* of God, and the *Dignity* of the *evangelical Diſpenſation*.

The Meaning of excluſive Terms.

SOME have been ſo weak as to imagine, that, if they cou'd but ſhew, that the Father is frequently repreſented in Scripture as the *one God*, there cou'd be nothing more requir'd towards the Subverſion of the Doctrine of a *Trinity* of Perſons in the *Unity* of the Divine *Eſſence*; never conſidering, that, tho' the Father may *primarily*, or, in a certain Reſpect, be ſo repreſented, yet *ſolely*, and in a Senſe excluſive of the Son, and the Holy Ghoſt, he is not; for the ſame Scriptures, which ſometimes ſtile the Father the *one God*, do likewiſe, either expreſly, or by neceſſary Implication, make the whole three Perſons together *one God*.

(a) Exod. xxiii. 20, 21. (b) Pſal. cii. 25. (c) Prov. viii. 22, &c. (d) See a large Collection of theſe in *Kidder's Meſſias*, Part III. (e) 2 Pet. i. 19. (f) 2 Cor. iv. 6. (g) Contr. Prax. (h) Luke xvi. 16. (i) *Fiddes's* Body of Divinity Vol. I.

(a) It is therefore a *Rule* and Maxim in *Interpretations*, and may be prov'd by Inſtances both from *ſacred* and *profane* Authors, that *excluſive Terms* are not to be underſtood with the *utmoſt Rigour*, ſo as to leave no Room for *tacit Exceptions*, ſuch as Reaſon and good Senſe will eaſily ſupply. Allowing then, that the Father in Scripture is called the *one*, or *only* God; yet, when we read of another Perſon, that, in like manner, is called God, the *bleſſed God*, (*b*) the *true God*, *&c.* When we find, that this Perſon is ſo nearly related, as a Son to a Father; that he is *in the Boſom of the Father*, and as intimate to him, as Thought is to the Mind; *That all Things, which the Father hath, are the Son's*; and that, *what Things ſoever the Father doeth, theſe alſo doeth the Son likewiſe:* When we find them repreſented as *one Temple*, as having *one Throne*, and making *one Light*; and obſerve withal, the ſame *Titles*, the ſame *Operations*, the ſame *Attributes*, the ſame *Glory* aſcrib'd to both; we cannot but conclude that the Term *one*, or *only*, muſt not, in this Caſe, be underſtood in a Senſe *excluſive* of the Perſon of the Son, but, either in oppoſition to *falſe Gods*, or, in its *primary* Conſtruction, wherein it relates *chiefly* to the Father.

The Son's Inferiority *in what Senſe.*

For we muſt remember, that, notwithſtanding this *Equality*, the *Catholick* Doctors have always taught that there is a *Subordination* of the Son to the Father; that the Son indeed has the ſame Divine Nature in common with the Father, but then, as the Father alone has the Divine Nature in himſelf, which the Son by Communication receiv'd from him, the Father is properly the *Head*, the *Root*, the *Source*, the *Fountain*, and *Original* of the Divinity, that is in the Son, and, in this Reſpect, has the *Pre-eminence*. The Truth is, the *primitive* Chriſtians allowed the whole *Trinity* to be *God*, but, being minded to preſerve the *Unity* entire, (*c*) they thought it expedient to refer all Things to *one* common *Head*; and ſince it was neceſſary to fix upon one *Perſon*, who ſhou'd be *primarily* conſider'd as God, in all Order and Decency it was to be the *Father*, who had reveal'd his own Perſon *firſt* to the World, and was recogniz'd under the Character of a *Father*, before either the Son, or the Holy Ghoſt were *diſtinctly* mention'd; and, for this Reaſon it is, that, in the Generality, we addreſs our Petitions and Thankſgivings to *God* the Father, as the *Top* of the Unity, the Riſe and Fountain of all, at the ſame time not *excluding*, but *tacitly* comprehending, the other two. Nor muſt it be forgotten, that, as the Word *Man* ſtands ſometimes for the whole *Species*, as well as any *Individual* of it; ſo, by way of *Analogy*, the Word *God* may ſometimes ſignify *all* the divine Perſons, as well as any particular one of *three:* And from theſe Obſervations it will follow, that, when, in our religious Worſhip, we apply to God under the Denomination of *Father*, we either thereby include the other *two* Perſons, (which ſhou'd never be omitted in our Thoughts) or give the *Preference* to the *firſt*, in order to preſerve the Divine *Unity*, as he is the eternal *Fountain* of Being to the other two; and that, when we offer up our Adorations in the Name of God *ſimply*, we thereby intend the *Deity* in *general*, and ſo include all *three* Perſons under that one Appellation.

And why we pray, and give Thanks chiefly *in the Name of God* the Father.

But not ſo, as to exclude the other two Perſons.

These are the true Reaſons of the Son's *Inferiority*, and *Subordination* to the Father, and why our Addreſſes are uſually made in one *determinate* Name, moſt commonly in that of *God*, or that of the *Father:* But, upon this Preſumption, to deny an *Equality* in the *three* ſacred Perſons, or to offer our Homage to *one* ſingle Perſon only, when each of the other has a proper Right to it, is defrauding the *other two* of their juſt *Dues*, and, inſtead of *honouring* God in the full Meaſure and Proportion, that his Goſpel requires, 'tis defeating the very End and Deſign of the *evangelical Inſtitution*, that was publiſh'd on purpoſe to give the World right Conceptions of the ſundry Perfections of the Divine Nature, which it might not have before; and to teach every one, that nameth the Name of Chriſt, that *(d) all Men ſhould honour the Son, even as they honour the Father, and that he, who honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father, who ſent him.*

The Son's Equality *conſiſtent with the Divine* Unity.

The Author to the *Hebrews*, meaning to ſhew the great Excellency and Dignity of our Saviour's Nature, founds his Argument upon his being the Son of God. (*e*) *He is made ſo much better than the Angels,* ſays

(*a*) *Waterland's* Defence of the Divinity of *Jeſus Chriſt.* (*b*) 1 John v. 20. (*c*) *Waterland's* Ser. Lady *Moyer's* Lect. (*d*) 1 John v. 23. (*e*) Heb i. 4, 5.

ſays he, *as he hath by Inheritance obtain'd a more excellent Name than they, for unto which of the Angels ſaid he at any Time, Thou art my Son, this Day have I begotten thee; and again, I will be to him a Father, and he ſhall be to me a Son.* Now, whatever *Facility* we may imagine in the Notion of a *created*, *inferior*, and *dependent* Being, to whom may be given the Name of *God*; yet, unleſs it had an *Identity* of Nature, equal to the Being that formed it, it cou'd not, by Virtue of its Creation, in the Senſe, that the Apoſtle contends for, be ſtiled a *Son*, neither cou'd the Perſon, that created it, have the proper Appellation of a *Father*.

(a) We allow, indeed, that there poſſibly may be ſome Natures ſuperior to Angels, and yet infinitely inferior to that of the true God; that our Saviour might derive ſuch a Nature from his Father, as wou'd make him more *excellent* than *Angels*, and yet place him at a great many Removes from the ſupreme *Deity:* But, when we conſider the other Characters, which the Apoſtle aſcribes to this moſt excellent Perſon, viz. that *he is the Brightneſs of his Father's Glory, and the expreſs Image of his Perſon*; that he *is appointed Heir of all Things*, and *upholdeth all Things by the Word of his Power*; that he is *the Maker of the Worlds, the Creator of all Things both in Heaven and Earth*; entitled to the *Name* and Attributes of *God*, as well as Divine Honour and *Worſhip*; we cannot but conclude, that, by this ineffable *Generation*, there cou'd not be leſs communicated to the Son, than the proper Nature of God; and yet *(b)* the Communication of this Nature cou'd, by no Means, infringe the *Unity* of it, becauſe the Divine *Eſſence* is ſimply *one*, and therefore cannot be *divided*; and, as it is abſolutely *infinite*, is incapable of being *multiplied*. To conclude this Anſwer, therefore, in the Words of a late *learned* Author, (whom I have made great uſe of upon this Subject) "We may obſerve,(*c*) ſays he, that "*Scripture* and *Antiquity* often tell us "of God and God, but never of two "Gods; Creator and Creator, but never "two Creators; Saviour and Saviour, but "never two Saviours; Lord and Lord, "but never two Lords; Judge and Judge, "but never two Judges; King and King, "but never two Kings." Theſe Things are eaſily accounted for upon *Catholick* Principles: Father and Son are *one Creator*, *one Saviour*, *one Lord*, *one Judge*, *one King*, *and one God*; becauſe their Operations, Attributes, Powers, and Perfections (and conſequently the *Subſtance* of both) are *one*.

DISSERTATION III.

* *Of the ever-bleſſed* TRINITY.

Why the Trinity treated of in this Place, and the Manner of doing it.

THE Deſign of the *Apoſtles* (as indeed of all other *Creeds*) is, to teach us to believe *in God the Father*, who *hath made us, and all the World*; *in God the Son, who hath redeemed us, and all Mankind*; and in *God the Holy Ghoſt, who has ſanctified us, and all the elect People of God*: And therefore, ſince the *Diſtinction* of theſe three Perſons

(a) Stephens on the Eter. Generation. *(b)* Ibid. *(c) Waterland's* Ser. at Lady *Moyer's* Lect.

* In the Infancy of Chriſtianity, when the *Catholicks* ſpoke of the *Three*, (for the *holy Three* was the only *Term*, that was us'd at firſt) they were wont to call them *one and the ſame Being*; and from hence ſome miſunderſtood them to mean, that the *Three* were *nominal* only, and not *diſtinct*, whilſt others contended, that, if they were *three*, they muſt be three *Beings*, and, conſequently, *three Gods*; and hereupon the *Church* was under a Neceſſity to invent new *Terms*, in order to guard againſt Miſconſtruction. For this Reaſon the Word *Trinity* was introduc'd by *Theophilus*, Biſhop of *Antioch*, in the ſecond *Century*, and intended to denote, not barely the *Number* Three, but the Thing *number'd* likewiſe, *i. e. three*, diſtinguiſh'd in ſuch a Manner, as that they may be enumerated by the *Firſt*, the *Second*, and the *Third*; and, as the *Sabellian* Hereſy increas'd, this Word was us'd by the *Catholick* Writers, (as we do now) to denote a real *perſonal Diſtinction*, as well as *Equality*, in the ſacred *Three*. The Word *Perſona*, which we tranſlate Perſon, does properly ſignify a *Vizor* or Maſk, which was anciently us'd to be worn in *acting of Plays*, and from thence, by an eaſy *Metaphor*, came to ſignify that *Part*, which any one acted, or the *Character*, which he ſuſtain'd; but ſometimes it was us'd to ſignify thoſe remarkable *Qualities*, which diſtinguiſh'd one Man from another, and fix'd the Notices of Difference and *Individuation*. This is the *grammatical* Senſe of the Word: And the earlieſt Writer we have, who applied it in the Doctrine of the *Trinity*, was *Tertullian*, an Author who was contemporary with *Theophilus*, about the End of the ſame Century. He uſes the Word in *Contradiſtinction* to *Subſtance*, by which he intends the *Being*, or real Nature of a Thing; and in what Senſe it is now to be taken, we may, in ſome meaſure, gather from the Sentiments of our *judicious Hooker*. "The Lord our God, ſays he,

"is

Perſons in the Godhead is firſt ſuggeſted under the Character of the *Father*, it may not be improper, in this Place, to enquire a little (I mean ſo far as the ſacred Scripture is our Guide) into this great *Myſtery* of the Ever-bleſſed Trinity. I call it a *great Myſtery*, (*a*) becauſe, if God had not been pleas'd to reveal it to us, it had never enter'd into the Heart of Man to conceive it; and, now, that he hath revealed it, (whether it be through the *Imperfection* of the Diſcovery, or the *Diſproportion* of our Faculties to the Subject, but ſo it is, that) the largeſt human Underſtanding cannot comprehend it: And yet, if I can but ſhew, (*b*) that the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt are ſo diſtinguiſh'd from each other in Scripture, as juſtifies our believing them to be three *Perſons*; that ſuch *Names*, and *Properties*, and *Operations*, are there attributed to them, as prove each of theſe *Perſons* to be truly *God*; and that, all this notwithſtanding, the Voice both of Scripture and Reaſon is expreſs, that the Godhead is but *one*, and conſequently, that theſe three Perſons are the *only true God*, I hope to make it appear, that the Doctrine of an *Unity in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity*, is not *unwarrantable*; and that as it proves, by this Means, to be an *Article* of our Chriſtian Faith, we are indiſpenſibly bound to believe it.

Three Perſons prov'd from Scripture.

In the ſolemn *Form of Bleſſing*, which *Aaron* and his Sons were commanded to give the People, (*c*) *The Lord bleſs thee, and keep thee; the Lord make his Face to ſhine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee; the Lord lift up his Countenance upon thee, and give thee Peace*; the Repetition of the ſacred Name of the Lord *three Times*, and every Time with a different *Accent*, made the *Jews* themſelves imagine, that there was ſome remarkable *Myſtery* in it, and therefore we need leſs wonder, that ſome *Chriſtian* Authors ſhou'd make it a *ſymbolical* Proof of a Trinity of Perſons in the Divine *Eſſence*. But, whatever the Import of this *Repetition* might be, 'tis certain, that, in the *Chriſtian Benediction* of (*d*) *the Grace of our Lord* Jeſus Chriſt, *and the Love of God, and the Fellowſhip of the Holy Ghoſt be with us all*, we have not only a Recital of three diſtinct Perſons, (tho' not in their *natural* Order) but of their different *Affections* likewiſe, *viz.* the *Love* of the Father, (here ſtiled *God* by way of Eminence) who is the Foundation of our *Redemption*; the *Grace* of the Son, whereby he was incited to undertake and execute it; and the *Communion* of the Spirit, whereby he makes that *Love* and *Grace* effectual to all true Believers. In the *Promiſe*, which our Saviour leaves with his Diſciples, (*e*) *I will pray the Father, and he ſhall give you another Comforter, who ſhall abide with you for ever, even the Spirit of Truth*, we have mention made of three Perſons (*the Father*, who is the Perſon the Son was to *petition*; the *Son*, who is the Perſon here promiſing; and the *Holy Ghoſt*,

" is but *one* God; in which *inviſible* Unity, notwithſtanding we adore the *Father*, as being altogether of " *himſelf*, we glorify that *conſubſtantial Word*, which is the *Son*; we bleſs and magnify that *co-eſſential* " *Spirit* eternally proceeding from both, which is the *Holy Ghoſt*. Seeing therefore the Father is of *none*, the " Son is of *the Father*, and the Spirit is of *both*, they are, by theſe their ſeveral *Properties*, really *diſtinguiſhable* " from each other: For the *Subſtance* of God, with this Property *to be of none*, does make the *Perſon* of the " *Father*; the very ſelf-ſame Subſtance, with this Property to be of *the Father*, makes the Perſon of the " *Son*; the ſame Subſtance, having added to it the Property of *Proceeding from the other two*, makes the Perſon " of the *Holy Ghoſt*: So that, in every Perſon, there is imply'd both the *Subſtance* of God, which is *one*, and alſo " that *Property*, which cauſes the ſame Perſon really and truly to differ from the *other two*." This conveys to us a pretty clear Notion of the Diſtinction between the Divine Perſons: But then, (to prevent Miſtakes) we are to obſerve, that, tho' the Perſons of Men are *diſtinct Men*, as well as diſtinct Perſons, yet we are not to imagine, that the Perſons in the Divine Nature are diſtinct *Gods*. *Three* Men cannot be all in the ſame Place at one and the ſame Time: The *Place*, which one fills, cannot, at the ſame Time, be occupied by both, or either of the others: Each is bounded and circumſcribed, and ſo every one is divided from the other. But now *Diviſion* and *Separation* is certainly an *Imperfection*, becauſe it implies a *finite*, *i.e.* a *limited* and confin'd Subſiſtence, and muſt not be admitted in the Godhead, becauſe it is neceſſarily *infinite*. The Divine Perſons therefore being all of them *infinite*, and equally *omnipreſent*, can no where be *ſeparate* from each other, but wherever one is, the others muſt be alſo. Though ſeveral Perſons therefore are ſeveral *Beings*, whenever the Perſons are *divided* and ſeparated from each other in Subſtance and Exiſtence; yet the Divine Perſons, being *undivided*, and having no ſeparate Exiſtence, but eſſentially *adhering* to, and *pervading* one another, cannot be accounted three *Subſtances*, or Beings, but make all together one Divine Being, diſtinguiſh'd by ſuch *Actions* and *Relations*, ſuch *Properties* and *Operations*, as, among us, we call *perſonal*, and from thence, (for want of a better Word) we uſe that of *Perſon*, thereby to expreſs their *Diſtinction*. *Wheatly* on the Creed, *Nicholls* on the Articles, *Hooker*'s Eccleſ. Polity, and *Jenkins*'s Reaſon. of Chriſt. Vol. II.

(*a*) *South*'s Ser. Vol. I. (*b*) *Stanhope*'s Ser. at *Boyle*'s Lect. (*c*) Numb. vi. 24, &c. (*d*) 2 Cor. xiii. 14. (*e*) John xv. 26.

Ghoſt, who is to be *ſent* by the *Firſt*; and (*a*) *in the Name* of the *Second*) all operating, according to their proper *Offices*, in the Order of their *Subſiſtence*. In the *Deſignation* of thoſe ſpiritual Graces, which at firſt were given to the *Church* of God, St. *Paul* tells us, that (*b*) *there are Diverſities of Gifts, but the ſame Spirit*, (here is the *third* Perſon in the ever-bleſſed *Trinity*) *Differences of Adminiſtrations, but the ſame Lord*, (here is the *ſecond* Perſon) *and Diverſities of Operations, but the ſame God, who worketh all in all*, (here is the *firſt* Perſon) who is the *Baſis* and *Head* of the Divinity. In the *Salutation*, which St. *Peter* ſends to the *Jewiſh* Converts, he ſtiles them (*c*) *Elect, according to the Knowledge of God the Father, through the Sanctification of the Spirit, unto Obedience, and ſprinkling of the Blood of* Jeſus Chriſt; where we may obſerve, that the three *Perſons* are not only named, but their *Offices* likewiſe *ſpecified*; the Father *elects*, the Spirit *ſanctifies*, *Jeſus Chriſt ſheds his Blood*, and ſo the Work of Man's Salvation is compleated. But, above all, in that *Form of Baptiſm*, which our (*d*) Lord deliver'd to the Apoſtles, the three Perſons are not only mention'd in their proper *Names*, and natural *Order*, but every one, that is baptiz'd, is baptiz'd in the Name of each Perſon *diſtinctly*, and of all three *jointly*, and is therefore dedicated and devoted to the Service of all: And (to mention no more) in the Time of our Lord's own Baptiſm, this Diſtinction of three Perſons is equally obſervable, when (*e*) the *Son* appeared in the River *Jordan*, the *Holy Ghoſt*, deſcending in the *Shape of a Dove*, lighted upon him, and the *Father* declar'd his full Acquieſcence in him by a Voice from Heaven, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleas'd.*

How they are diſtinct.

THUS we ſee, that, in ſeveral Places of Scripture, Mention is made of three Perſons in Conjunction: But, when we ſay, that theſe are *three Perſons*, (*f*) our Meaning is not, that they are like three Perſons among Men, who have different Wills and Operations; but we call them ſo, becauſe we know not how better to diſtinguiſh the different *Relations*, in which Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt ſubſiſt, than by calling *God*, who ſuſtains this *threefold* Capacity, *three Perſons*, tho' ſtill theſe *three* be one and the ſame *Will*, one and the ſame *Operation*; one and the ſame *Eſſence*, and are diſtinguiſhable only by the *Rank* they hold in the Divine Nature; by the *Relation*, wherein they ſtand to each other; and by their *Offices* and *Adminiſtrations*, with Regard to us. (*g*) For 'tis *God*, by whoſe ſupreme Authority every Thing in the Univerſe is directed; 'tis the *Son of God*, by whom the Government of the *Church*, in particular, is adminiſter'd; and 'tis the *Spirit of God*, by whom all Gifts and Graces, for the Sanctification of Believers, are diſpenſed. The *God and Father of our Lord* Jeſus Chriſt, the infinite *Source* of undivided Majeſty, is the *Spring* and Original of all Good; *the Son of the Father* is, to us, the *Author* and *Conveyer* of all Communications, from that *inexhauſtible* Fountain of Goodneſs; and the *Spirit of God*, ſent forth from the Father, and the Son, is the immediate *Diſpenſer* and *Diſtributer* of all thoſe Benefits, which the Father beſtows upon us, by his Son's *Interceſſion*.

That they are all Divine *Perſons prov'd from* Scripture.

THIS *Diverſity* of Offices ſufficiently indicates a *Diſtinction* of Perſons: But then, that theſe Perſons are all equally *divine*, the Paſſages, which we have already alledg'd, will be a ſufficient Teſtimony. For how cou'd our bleſſed Saviour, in the *Form* of *Baptiſm*, which conveys ſuch Bleſſings and Privileges, as can come from none but God, join the Son, and the Holy Ghoſt with the *ſupreme* uncreated Being? How cou'd the Apoſtle, in his Salutation of the *Corinthians*, mention the Son, and the Holy Ghoſt, as equal Fountains of ſuch Gifts and Favours, as no Creatures were able to beſtow? How cou'd God, at our Saviour's Baptiſm, proclaim *him* ſo openly to be his *beloved Son*, or the *Holy Ghoſt* be ſent to ſupply his Place; to be with the Church for ever, and to adminiſter its weighty Affairs? In a word, how cou'd the *Son* be ſaid to *ſhed his Blood*, and to make a *full Propitiation* for the Sins of the whole World? Or how cou'd the *Holy Ghoſt* be ſaid to *ſanctify* the corrupt Nature of Man, and to *renew the Image* of God upon his Soul, a Work as difficult, as creating him at firſt? How cou'd all theſe Things be predicated of theſe two Perſons, I ſay, if they were not of the ſame Subſtance with the Father, *co-eternal together, and co-equal?*

WHAT ſhall we ſay then, if, upon far-

(*a*) John xiv. 26. (*b*) 1 Cor. xii. 4, &c. (*c*) 1 Pet. i. 2 (*d*) Mat. xxviii. 19. (*e*) Mat. iii. 16.
(*f*) *Stanhope*'s Ser. at *Boyle*'s Lect. (*g*) *Clarke*'s Ser. Vol. VI.

ther Enquiry, we find all the *lofty* Titles, ſuch as (*a*) *the Lord God*, (*b*) *the Lord of Glory*, (*c*) *the Lord of all*, (*d*) *the true God*, *and* (*e*) *the only wiſe God*, &c. which are any where conferr'd upon the *Deity*; all the *eſſential* Attributes, ſuch as (*f*) Eternity, (*g*) Omniſcience, (*h*) Omnipotence, (*i*) Immutability, &c. which are any where aſcrib'd to the *Supreme* God; all the *wonderful* Works of (*k*) Creation, (*l*) Conſervation, (*m*) Reſurrection, (*n*) Judgment, &c. which none but an Almighty and Omniſcient Being can perform; and all manner of *religious Worſhip*, both from Men and Angels, which, without groſs *Idolatry*, cannot be extended to the moſt exalted Creature, are attributed to the Son, the ſame in Kind, and equal in Degree? What ſhall we ſay, when we find, that we were dedicated in Baptiſm to the *Holy Ghoſt*, as well as to the Father and Son; that our Body is ſaid to be (*o*) the *Temple of God*, becauſe *the Spirit of God dwelleth in us*; that this (*p*) *Spirit ſearcheth all Things, even the deep Things of God*; that (*q*) *there is no going from his Preſence*, nor fleeing from his Inſpection; (*r*) that *Blaſpheming againſt him is not to be forgiven, neither in this World, nor in the next*; and that to him are likewiſe given the incommunicable Works and Operations of God; to him the *Gift of Miracles*, to him the *Raiſing of the Dead*, to him the *Care* of all the Churches, and to him the free *Diſpoſal* of all ſupernatural Graces whatever; (*s*) *for all theſe Things, worketh that one and the ſelf-ſame Spirit, dividing unto every Man ſeverally as he will?* What ſhall we ſay indeed, but that theſe are ſuch plain *Notes* and Characters of Divinity, as cannot, without the utmoſt Abſurdity, be aſcribed to any but God. The Truth is, ſince we find the ſame *Titles* given to the Son and Holy Ghoſt, as are *due* only to God; the ſame *Attributes* aſcrib'd to them, as are *peculiar* to God; the ſame *Works* done by them, as can be *perform'd* by none but God; the ſame *Worſhip* paid to them, as can belong to none but God; we have no Reaſon to doubt, but that they, to whom theſe diſtinguiſhing *Titles* are in Scripture given, theſe peculiar *Attributes* are aſcrib'd, theſe Divine *Works* and *Offices* are aſſign'd, and this incommunicable *Worſhip* order'd to be paid, muſt be truly Partakers of the Divine Nature, or, in Reality, *one God*.

And yet neceſſarily one.

How they *ſubſiſt* in one and the ſame Nature, and in what *manner* they are *diſtinct* from each other, is more than our preſent *Faculties* are able to conceive: But that there is ſuch an *Unity* of Eſſence, and ſuch a *Diſtinction* of Perſons in that Eſſence, is clearly and fully aſſerted by St. *John* in that remarkable Paſſage; (*t*) *There are three that bear Record in Heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghoſt, and* * *theſe three*

(*a*) Luke i. 16. (*b*) 1 Cor. ii. 8. (*c*) Acts x. 36. (*d*) 1 John v. 10. (*e*) Jude ult. (*f*) 1 John i. 2. (*g*) Rev. ii. 23. (*h*) Rev. i. 8. (*i*) Heb. i. 12. (*k*) Col. i. 16. (*l*) Heb. i. 3. (*m*) John v. 2. (*n*) Ver. 22. (*o*) 1 Cor. iii. 16. (*p*) 1 Cor. ii. 10. (*q*) Pſal. cxxxix. 7. (*r*) Mat. xii. 31. (*s*) 1 Cor. xii. 4, 11. (*t*) 1 John v. 7.

* This Text is a *Weapon*, which the *Anti-trinitarians* have endeavour'd to wreſt out of our Hands; and therefore it may not be amiſs, in this Place, to give the Reader a *Summary* of the Arguments, that are commonly urg'd for our adhering to it. The Strength of the *Anti-trinitarian* Allegations conſiſts in theſe Particulars, ——"That there are many ancient, both *Greek* and *Latin Manuſcripts*, (ſuch as the *Alexandrian* in our "*Royal* Library, and ſeveral others in the *French* King's) where this controverted Paſſage is *omitted*; "and that it is never once *mention'd* by *Gregory Nazianzen*, *Gregory Nyſſen*, nor even by *Athanaſius*, or "*St. Auſtin*, whoſe *Controverſies* with the *Arians*, and other Oppoſers of the *Trinity*, would have na-"turally led them to the *Citation* of this Text, had it been then in their *Bibles*." This is the Subſtance of what they have to ſay: But, in anſwer to this, it is alledg'd, on the other Side, ——that, as for *Manuſcripts*, there are many more, of as good Authority, which have this *Clauſe*; that the Divines of *Levain*, who took great Pains in the Edition of their *New Teſtament*, and compar'd it with all the *Manuſcripts*, they cou'd procure, do teſtify, that it was wanting only in *five*; that *Robert Stephens* made a Collation of *ſixteen Manuſcript* Copies, whereof the greater Part had it; and that *Lucas Burgenſis*, who conſulted a vaſt many, confeſſes indeed, that five *Latin* ones wanted it; but then he affirms, that all the *Greek* ones had it. The Truth is, almoſt all *Manuſcripts*, of ſix or ſeven Hundred Years ſtanding, have this Text; and, of thoſe, which are of a *Thouſand* or *twelve Hundred* Years Date, ſome of them *retain* it, and ſome *omit* it: But then, it is to be remember'd, that *theſe* carry us near the Time of the *Arians*, and, higher than this *Period*, there are no Manuſcripts at all. Now that there were anciently Copies of the New Teſtament containing this Clauſe, before the Time of *Arianiſm*, is plain from the Teſtimonies of *St. Cyprian*, and *St. Jerom*, who both cite it, and from an *anthentick Greek* Copy, from whence the *old Latin Verſion*, (as is ſuppos'd) which we have at preſent, and account it more *ancient*, than any *Greek* Manuſcript now extant, was made. If therefore we are to ſuppoſe any *Falſification* in this Affair, it is, at leaſt, as likely to be chargeable upon the *Hereticks*, for *expunging*, as upon the *Orthodox*, for *interpolating* this Text; becauſe the Orthodox had no occaſion for any ſuch

Forgery,

three are one, i. e. one Thing, one Being, one Subſtance, one Eſſence. For, upon conſidering the *ſingular Perfection* of the Deity, we cannot but perceive, that theſe *three* muſt neceſſarily be *one God*, becauſe the Divinity cannot produce any thing from itſelf, *i. e.* from its Divine *Eſſence*, but what is the *ſame*, ſince, as it is of an infinite and immenſe Nature, (which includes the utmoſt Poſſibility of Perfection) it cannot admit of any *Addition*, or *Multiplication:* So that the *Plurality* of the Perſons in the Godhead muſt in courſe center in *one* Divine *Eſſence*, and we be forc'd to ſubſcribe to the *Apoſtles* Declaration, that, as (*a*) *there is one Lord, one Faith, one Baptiſm, ſo is there one God, and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in us all.*

What we may collect from Reaſon *concerning this* Myſtery.

THIS is the Doctrine of the *Trinity*, as it is reveal'd: And let us now ſee, what it is, that our *Reaſon* has to ſay to it. Our Reaſon tells us, that *(b)* the Principle of *Inviduation* in Man, or what it is, that cauſes one Man to be an *individual* Perſon different from any other, is a Matter of no ſmall *Ambiguity:* We may reaſonably imagine therefore, that there is much more Difficulty in finding out the Principle of Individuation in Beings, that are purely *ſpiritual*, becauſe they have no *material* Accidents to diſtinguiſh them; and yet, if we aſcend higher, the Difficulty will grow upon us. The Difference between *infinite* and *finite* Beings is ſo vaſt and inconceivable, that, what is affirm'd of the one, can, by no Means, comport with the other; and therefore what ſhou'd hinder, but that, in God there may be a *Diſtinction in Perſons*, without any *Difference in Eſſence*, tho' this be impoſſible in *created* Beings?

OUR Reaſon tells us, that, in *natural* as well as *reveal'd* Religion, there are ſeveral Points, which to us ſeem ſtrange and unaccountable, tho' we are fully aſſur'd of their Reality. That ſomething (for Inſtance) muſt be *eternal*, we are all ſatisfied; and yet we muſt allow, that, whatever is ſo, (*c*) can never be capable of a *ſhorter* or *longer* Duration. That, which has exiſted without *any Beginning*, muſt have exiſted no longer, at this preſent Moment of Time, than it had exiſted Millions of Ages ago; and, Millions of Ages to come, what is to exiſt *eternally*, will have exiſted no longer, than it has *now*. This every one, that has the leaſt Conception of *Eternity*, muſt allow: And yet how ſurpriſing and contradictory does it ſeem to be, that not only three Ages, and one Age, ſhou'd be the ſame, but that there ſhou'd be no Difference between one *Hour*, nay one Minute, and never ſo many Ages, in reſpect of Eternity. Now that *Eternity* is an eſſential Attribute of God, we have ſhewn above; and, if God be ſo wonderful in his *Attributes*, why ſhou'd we account him leſs ſo, in the manner of his *Subſiſtence?*

No Contradiction *in it.*

OUR Reaſon tells us, that, ſince the Scripture Repreſentation of the *Trinity*, *viz.* that there are *three* divine Perſons *diſtinctly* ſubſiſting, and yet *inſeparably* united in the ſame *Godhead*, implies no *Contradiction*; ſince

Forgery, ſince there were other ſufficient Proofs in Scripture of the ſame Point. Our Saviour himſelf aſſerts the very ſame Thing of his Father and himſelf; *I and my Father are one, i. e.* one *Being*, one *Subſtance*, as the *Original* imports; and ſurely there is no more *Inconſiſtency* in ſaying, that *three are one*, than that *two are one.* But now, on the other hand, the *Hereticks* were under a violent Temptation to *remove* a Paſſage, which was ſo great an *Eye-ſore* to them, and ſo ſtrong a *Defence* againſt their Attempts: And, if they were minded to remove it, the Thing might be done with great Facility. Nay, admitting that neither Party were *culpable* in this Reſpect, why might not the *Omiſſion* be occaſioned another Way? Since the two adjoining *Verſes* begin with the ſame Words, *There are three that bear Record*, the Tranſcriber, having writ down theſe Words, might, by Miſtake, caſt his Eye upon the concluding Part of the *latter* Verſe, and ſo the whole *preceding* Verſe might come to be left out. And that this was the *real* Caſe, we have the more Reaſon to believe, becauſe, without the Clauſe, which mentions *the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghoſt*, the *next* Verſe is quite maim'd, and hardly good Senſe. The Words *on Earth* ſtand *disjointed* by themſelves: Whereas the preceding Words *in Heaven* being taken along with them, make a clear, ſtrong, and elegant *Antitheſis.* Now, put the Caſe, that a wrong and imperfect *Copy* was thus occaſion'd by the Negligence of a *Tranſcriber*, when once it was gone Abroad, it was no hard Matter to propagate the ſame Error, or Omiſſion, in many others, which, in Proceſs of Time, by the Prevalency of the *Arian Biſhops* in the *Eaſt*, towards the Riſe of that *Hereſy*, and by the Favour of the *Gothick Kings* in the *Weſt*, who were Abettors of it, might come to be accounted *genuine*; and to this Purpoſe we find St. *Jerom* informing us, *That great Faults had been committed by the heretical Tranſlators, putting only the three Words*, i. e. the Water, the Blood, and the Spirit, *in their Editions, and leaving out the Teſtimony of* the Father, the Word, and the Spirit, *on which the Catholick Faith is very much ſtrengthen'd, and the one Subſtance of the Father, the Word, and the Spirit, is prov'd.* Vid. Prol. to the firſt Ep. of St. John, *Martin*'s Crit. Diſſert. *Mills*'s Proleg. *Nicholls* on the Art. *Johnſon*'s Ser. Vol. I. *Trapp* on the Trinity, and *Young*'s Ser. Vol II.

(*a*) Eph. iv. 5, 6. (*b*) *Jenkins*'s Reaſon. Vol. II. (*c*) *Seed*'s Ser. Vol. II. and *Jenkins*'s ibid.

(a) ſince it no where affirms, that the *one* God is *three* Gods, or *three* Perſons *one* Perſon, there needs to be no Scruple in receiving it; (b) becauſe the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt are never ſaid to be *three* and *one* in the ſame Reſpect. Conſider'd in *common*, and as Partakers all of the ſame Divine Nature, they are *one*, entirely *one*; conſider'd in their *perſonal* Capacity, and as related to each other, they are *three*, diſtinctly *three*; but this makes them no more three Gods, than the Sun, the Beam, and the Splendor are three *Suns*; or the Root, the Body, and Branches are three *Trees*, which are common *Similitudes* among the Ancients to illuſtrate this great *Myſtery*.

It is the prevailing *Opinion.*

OUR Reaſon tells us, that, upon Examination, we find the current Senſe of the *Church* was always this Way; that the *primitive* Chriſtians, in their *Creeds*, their *Catechiſms*, and *Confeſſions*, aſſert a *Trinity* of Perſons, having one and the ſame *Eſſence*; and, tho' this Doctrine met with frequent Oppoſition from very potent Adverſaries, yet, by the Force of its Truth, and the Strength of the Learning of its Defenders, it always prevail'd, and gain'd an Eſtabliſhment at laſt: (c) In point of good *Manners* therefore, as well as good *Senſe*, we ſhou'd ſuppoſe, that, when a *few* learned Perſons deny a *Propoſition*, and others, forty times more numerous, and altogether as learned, do *unanimouſly* affirm it, the Preſumption of Truth ſtands with the *Majority*, and that he, who pretends to *diſſent*, and maintain the Oppoſition againſt ſo many, can hardly eſcape the Cenſure of (d) *intruding into thoſe Things, which he hath not ſeen, vainly puffed up in his fleſhly Mind.*

And very probable *in a* divine *Revelation.*

OUR Reaſon tells us, that if, upon ſearching the Divine Records, we find it affirm'd in expreſs Terms, concerning the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, that theſe three are *one God*, we ought to believe it, becauſe nothing is more *rational*, than to give credit to him, who cannot deceive us; nothing more common, than to find new *Diſcoveries* in a new Religion; and nothing more likely, than that theſe Diſcoveries ſhou'd be *wonderful*, where God is not only the *Revealer*, but alſo the *Object revealed.* All therefore that we have to do in this Caſe, is, to enquire diligently, 1*ſt*, whether thoſe Scriptures, which go under the Character of a Divine *Revelation*, have in reality God for their Author, and 2*dly*, whether they contain ſuch plain Propoſitions, as amount to the Doctrine, now under the Debate; and, if we find they do this, our Buſineſs then is, (e) "to call *Rea-*
"*ſon* from her Seat of Judgment, and to
"place *Faith* in her Room, which either
"gives or refuſes her Conſent, not as the
"Thing propos'd is *comprehenſible*, or not
"*comprehenſible*, but as it is either *reveal'd*
"or not *reveal'd.* For

Which muſt be expected to have Myſteries in it.

ONCE more, our Reaſon tells us, that, as a Divine Revelation is expected to abound with *Myſteries*, Chriſtianity wou'd make but a *poor Figure*, (as having nothing to diſtinguiſh it from an *human* Inſtitution) had it been ſent into the World deſtitute of theſe. What therefore ſome eſteem to be *needleſs* and *ſuperfluous*, are, in reality, the proper *Atteſtations* of its Divinity; and it ſeems not improbable, that God might interweave them in its Compoſition, not only to diſcover to us ſuch important *Points*, as we were Strangers too before, but (f) to ſecure the *Majeſty* likewiſe of his Religion from Contempt; to create in us an aweful Reverence of Mind towards theſe holy *Truths*; to excite our Induſtry, and engage our Attention to ſtudy them; to provide *ſtrong Meat* for *grown* Saints, as well as *Milk* for *Babes* in Chriſt; and to give us a ſmall Taſte and Glimpſe of thoſe great and glorious Things, which ſhall hereafter be fully diſcovered to us, in the other World, though now, in a great meaſure, they are *hidden from our Eyes.*

And that we are bound to believe *it, as being a Doctrine of the laſt* Importance.

BE the *Obſcurities* then never ſo many in this great *Article* of our holy Religion, yet Reaſon bids us believe it, and that not only, becauſe God has revealed it, but becauſe he has laid it upon us, as a *neceſſary* Condition of our Salvation; for (g) *go ye into all the World, and preach the Goſpel unto every Creature; he that believeth, and is baptiz'd* i. e. (h) *in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghoſt*, (for ſo the *Commiſſion* runs) *ſhall be ſaved, but he that believeth not, ſhall be damn'd*; and (i) here we may obſerve, that theſe are the Words of our Saviour

(a) *Blackhall's* Ser. at *Boyle's* Lect. (b) *Stanhope's* Ser. at *Boyle's* Lect. (c) *South's* Ser. Vol. IV.
(d) Col. ii. 18. (e) *Norris* of Reaſon and Faith. (f) *Atterbury's* Ser. Vol. III. (g) Mark xvi. 15, 16.
(h) Mat. xxviii. 19. (i) *Wheatly* on the Creed.

Saviour Chriſt, who being (*a*) the *Author and Finiſher of our Faith*, moſt certainly knew for what End and Purpoſe he revealed this Doctrine; and, being (*b*) *ordain'd of God to be Judge of the Quick and the Dead*, cou'd not but be ſenſible how much it wou'd affect the future Fate of our Souls. We miſtake the Matter then very much, if we ſuppoſe, that this is a Point of mere *Speculation*, and only deſign'd for the Amuſement and Entertainment of our Underſtanding. No, it is an Article of the higheſt *Importance*; a *fundamental* Doctrine of the Goſpel; the very *Life* and *Spirit* of Chriſtianity, which diffuſes itſelf through the whole Body, and communicates Vigour to every Part of it: Without the Knowledge of which, (*c*) we ſhou'd want many cogent *Motives* to Chriſtian Practice; have no true Perception of the *Atonement* and *Satisfaction* made by Chriſt; no perfect Notion of the Doctrine of *Grace* and *Regeneration*; and no Rule for the *Specification*, and right Direction of our Worſhip.

In ſhort, it is the *Badge* and *Characteriſtick* of our moſt holy *Profeſſion*, and we cannot be *Chriſtians* without believing it. For the Scheme of Man's Salvation, (as it is ſet forth in the Goſpel) ſeems to be calculated chiefly for this End, *viz. to bring us more acquainted with this Trinity of Perſons in the Divine Nature*: And accordingly, we may obſerve, (*d*) that, in this new *Oeconomy*, ſuch a *Redemption* was provided, ſuch an *Expiation* for Sins required, and ſuch a Method of *Sanctification* appointed, as naturally lead us to the Knowledge of theſe three diſtinct Perſons, and ſo inſtruct us, how infinitely the World is oblig'd to them: Inſtruct us, I ſay, in what *Part* each *Perſon* undertook, and thence vigorouſly incite us, (*e*) to pay a conſtant Tribute of Praiſe and Adoration to *God the Father*, whoſe infinite *Wiſdom* contriv'd the ſtupendous *Plan*; to *God the Son*, whoſe unbounded Love engaged in the *Execution* of it; and to *God the Holy Ghoſt*, whoſe *aſſiſting* Graces enable us to perform the *Conditions* of it. And therefore, to conclude this lofty Subject in that Voice of Melody and Thankſgiving, which is in the Choir above; (*f*) *Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come*, (*g*) *Bleſſing, Honour, Glory, and Power be unto him, that ſitteth on the Throne*, (*h*) *unto the ſeven Spirits, which are before the Throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.* Amen.

SECT. IV. ALMIGHTY.

The EXPOSITION.

The Meaning of the Word Almighty *in this Place.*

THE next *Title*, or Characteriſtick of the Supreme Being occurring in our Creed, is that of *Almighty*, which, according to the * *original* Word, does not ſo properly ſignify his *Power in Operation* (which is the Meaning of the Term, we tranſlate in the ſame Manner, in the *ſixth Article*) as his *Authority in Dominion.* In this

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(*a*) Heb. xii. 2. (*b*) Acts x. 42. (*c*) *Waterland*'s Import. of the Doct. of the Trinity. (*d*) *Waterland* ibid. (*e*) *Seed*'s Ser. Vol. II. (*f*) Rev. iv. 8. (*g*) Ch. v. 13. (*h*) Ch. i. 4.

* The Word is παντοκράτως, which, in the Opinion of the *Greek* Writers and Interpreters, has various Significations, but the Expounders of the *Creed* do uſually refer it to theſe three. 1ſt, It means God's *Immenſity*, and *Omnipreſence*, that he is every where, and in every Place, that he *contains* all Things, and is himſelf contained of none, being without all *Bounds* or Limitation; in which Senſe it was levell'd againſt the *Gnoſticks*, who ſuppoſed (as we ſaid before) a certain Place, within which the ſupreme God was contained, and, living there in Reſt and Silence with other inferior Gods, never come out from thence to take any Cognizance of the Affairs of this lower World. 2dly, It ſignifies God's *infinite Power* and *Energy*, by which he made the World out of Nothing, without the Aſſiſtance of *Angels*, or any other Help whatever; in which Senſe it ſeems to have been inſerted in the Creed, in Oppoſition to the ſeveral Followers of *Simon Magus*, who all combined in the Degradation of the *Almighty*, by robbing him of the Glory of *Creating*, and Framing this ſtupendous *Fabrick* of the Univerſe. 3dly, It denotes his *ſovereign Dominion* over all Things and Perſons, and his *providential Regency* and Gubernation of them, according *to the Counſel of his own Will:* And, in this Senſe (which muſt be owned is the *primary* Senſe of the Word) it ſeems to be intended againſt the above mentioned *Gnoſticks*, who not only denied God's Creation of the World, but refuſed to acknowledge that he any ways concerned himſelf with the Management and Direction of it. That in the Creed however, God's *Government* of the World ſhould be mentioned before his *Creation* of it, might ſeem a little ſtrange, were it not evident, that the *original* Word is of Senſe full enough to include both, as it certainly did in all thoſe *Symbols* (which are not a few) where the Clauſe *Maker of Heaven and Earth* is omitted: But the Explication of the other Word, which denotes God's *Power in acting*, we ſhall reſerve to its proper Place, *Pearſon* and *Barlow* on the Creed, and *King*'s Crit. Hiſt. of it.

this Senſe his *Almightineſs* imports his *Sovereignty* over all his Creatures, and his *abſolute Power* to govern them juſt as he pleaſes; and, conſequently, implies *(a)* a *Right* to diſpoſe of their outward *Condition* and Circumſtances of Life, as his Divine Wiſdom accounts moſt proper; a *Right* to impoſe upon them any *Laws*, (whether *moral* or *poſitive*) that he thinks conducive to the Proof of their Obedience; a *Right* to inflict *Evils* and *Calamities*, either *ſpiritual* or *temporal*, for the Puniſhment and Amendment of thoſe, that do *Evil*; and a *Right* to exerciſe with fatherly Corrections even thoſe, that do *well*, for the Trial of their Faith, and the Improvement of their Virtue; always provided, that, whatever he does of this Kind, be not contrary to his own *eſſential* Dignity and Perfections, nor repugnant to the *natural State* and Condition, wherein he hath placed his *Creatures*.

God's Right of Dominion *over all, from his* Creation.

THOSE, who profeſſedly treat of *Politicks*, do ſuppoſe, — that if, in a *free* State, a Sovereign Prince were to be *elected*, he, who is beſt qualified to provide for the Commonweal, as being moſt remarkable for Wiſdom, and Goodneſs, and Extent of Power, according to natural Reaſon and Juſtice, wou'd moſt certainly deſerve the Preference: And, if ſuch *Pre-eminence* of Nature be a juſt Foundation of Authority among Men, then queſtionleſs God, who, in all theſe Reſpects, incomparably ſurpaſſes all Things, has an inconteſtible Right to govern all. Nor does he only ſurpaſs every Thing in the *Excellency* of his Perfections, but, as that Perſon, who gives *Being* to any Thing, has, upon that Claim, the ſole *Property* and Dominion over it; (*b*) ſo God, who, by the omnipotent Act of his Will, at firſt created all Things out of nothing, is, by an unqueſtionable and *indefeaſible* Title, the great Lord and Proprietor, the ſupreme Diſpoſer and Governor of them all: And therefore, (*c*) *Worthy art thou, O Lord, to receive Glory and Honour, and Power, (i. e.* to poſſeſs the *Royal* Majeſty, and ſovereign Dominion over the World) *for thou haſt made all Things, and for thy Pleaſure they are, and were created. (d) Thine, O Lord, is the Greatneſs, and the Power, and the Glory, and the Victory, and the Majeſty; for all that is in the Heaven, and in the Earth, is thine. Thine is the Kingdom, O Lord, and thou art exalted as Head above all.*

And Preſervation *of all.*

THUS the Right of Dominion, which God has over all, is *originally* founded on his *creative* Power; but, when the World was once made, it was highly neceſſary, that he, who firſt *formed* it, ſhou'd take the *Government* into his own Hands. For, tho' the *Syſtem* of Things, as it now ſtands, is certainly a very wonderful *Fabrick*, contriv'd with an infinite Number of *Parts* duly ſubſervient to each other, and a beautiful *Harmony* and Proportion running through the Whole; yet, that it continues in the ſame *Regularity* and Order, this is the Effect of that ſteady Government, which directs its *Goings*, and keeps all its *Movements* right. *(e)* What Power leſs, than the *Almighty*'s, cou'd reſtrain the *jarring* Elements from falling *foul* upon one another, and ſo putting the whole Frame of Nature into its ancient *Chaos* and Confuſion? What Power leſs, than their *Creator's*, cou'd ſteer the Courſe of the vaſt *celeſtial* Bodies; every Day ſend the *Sun* round the *Firmament*, and light up the *Stars* of Heaven at Night; bleſs us with the grateful Return of *Seaſons*, and crown every *Year with his Goodneſs?* What Power leſs, than the Sovereign Ruler's of the Univerſe, cou'd ſupport, and maintain the *(f) Bound*, and the *Bars*, which at firſt he ſet to *the Sea*; and, *tho' the Waves thereof toſs themſelves, yet can they not prevail, tho' they roar, yet can they not paſs over them?* And, to name no more, (for the World is full of the Wonders of Providence) what leſs, than an immenſe, all-powerful, and omniſcient Being, cou'd extend its Care and Inſpection to all *Creatures*, even the moſt *inconſiderable*, and to all *Events*, even the moſt *caſual* and fortuitous; to *(g)* the *Graſs of the Field, which To-day is, and To-morrow is caſt into the Oven*; to *(h)* the *Fowls of the Air, two of which are ſold for a Farthing*; to the leaſt Things that belong to Men, *(i) the Hairs of our Head, which are all number'd*; and even to *(k) the Lot, which is caſt into the Lap, but the whole Diſpoſing of it is of the Lord.*

The Heathen Notion.

WHETHER the *Heathens*, who had a Multitude of *ſubordinate* Deities, acknowledged their ſupreme *Jupiter* in all this Latitude of Power and Dominion, their Authors

(*a*) *Tillotſon*'s Ser. Vol. II. (*b*) *Moſs*'s Ser. Vol. V. (*c*) Rev. iv. 7. (*d*) 1 Chron. xxix. 11. (*e*) *Moſs* ibid. (*f*) Jer. v. 22. and Job xxxviii. 10, 11. (*g*) Mat. vi. 30. (*h*) Mat. x. 29. (*i*) Mat. x. 30. (*k*) Prov. xvi. 33.

thors are not ſo well agreed; but (*a*) their cuſtomary *Deciſion* of doubtful Matters by the Solemnity of *Oaths*, which were a direct Appeal to his *Omniſcience* and *Juſtice*; by their Oblation of *Sacrifices*, for the Removal of the *Evils* they felt, the Procuration of the good Things they wanted, or the Return of Thanks for Mercies received; and, above all, their *Invocation* of him with Prayer and Supplication, either to *deliver* them from Danger, or to *beſtow* his Benefits upon them; were publick Acknowledgments of his Providence, *overſeeing*, and directing the Concerns of Mankind: And to this the *Pſalmiſt* ſeems to allude, when he addreſſes himſelf to God in this Manner; (*b*) *O thou, that heareſt the Prayer, unto thee ſhall all Fleſh come*; where the Words *all Fleſh* may well be ſuppoſed to ſignify at leaſt the *Generality* of Mankind.

Scriptural. WE indeed, who have the *ſacred Oracles* for our Inſtructors, meet with Declarations almoſt innumerable to this Purpoſe: For a main Intent of God's giving us theſe Oracles, was, to aſſure us, that (*c*) *the moſt high, great in Council, and mighty in Work, ruleth in the Kingdoms of Men*, and diſpoſeth of all their Affairs. There he is ſet forth, as the Author of all Events, both good and bad, ſo that (*d*) *no Evil happens in a City, but the Lord doeth it.* There he is repreſented, as the *Searcher of Hearts*, the Judge of all Men's Deſigns and Actions, the *Avenger* of the Wicked, and the *Refuge* of the Righteous. Therein we are told, *that* (*e*) *the Ways of Man are before the Eyes of the Lord*, (*f*) *who, from the Place of his Habitation, looketh upon all, that dwell on the Earth, and conſidereth all their Works*; and therein we are aſſur'd, that (*g*) he is *the God of Battles*, and that *no King is ſaved by the Multitude of his Armies, neither is any mighty Man delivered by much Strength.*

And hiſtorical *Evidence of it.* BUT, if even the Scriptures were ſilent, the Teſtimony of all *Hiſtory*, if not the Conviction of our own *Experience*, is a Confirmation of the Doctrine, we are now conſidering. For, (*h*) if ever there were any extraordinary *Deliverances*, or any remarkable *Judgments* extended to Kingdoms, Cities, or particular Perſons, which carried the *Marks* and Signatures of God's Hand in them: If ever there were any *Propheſies*, foretelling future *Events*, perfectly *contingent*, and depending upon the *Wills of Men*, which did not come to paſs, 'till many Years after: If ever there were any *Miracles*, wrought either by *Moſes* and the *Prophets*, or by *Chriſt* and his *Apoſtles*, for the Confirmation of the *Jewiſh* or the *Chriſtian* Religion: If ever there were any *Notices* given of approaching Calamities by *Voices* from Heaven, by ſtrange Appearances in the Air, and other ſuch *Preſages*, as cannot be accounted for by Nature: (*i*) If ever any great and wonderful Things have been done by an unſeen *Concurrence* of many caſual and fortuitous Events; ſecret Sins, (eſpecially barbarous *Murders*) diſcover'd by ſome ſtrange *Accident*, and wicked and miſchievous Conſpiracies defeated at the very *Inſtant* of Execution: Or, laſtly, if ever any good Man received any *Bleſſing* he wanted, or avoided any *Misfortune* he dreaded, in ſuch a manner, as might rationally be accounted an *Anſwer* to his fervent Prayers: If any of theſe Things have come to paſs, I ſay (as ſome of them muſt certainly fall within the Compaſs of our own Reading, or Experience) then have we a convincing Proof of a divine Power, ſuper-intending human Affairs, and (*k*) *working all Things, both in Heaven and Earth, according to the Counſel of his own Will.*

God's Government extends to all Cauſes natural. TOWARDS the End of the Hiſtory of *Job*, God is introduc'd as reaſoning with his Servant in this Strain: — (*l*) *Canſt thou bind the ſweet Influences of the* Pleiades, *or looſe the Bands of* Orion? *Canſt thou bring forth* Mazaroth *in his Seaſon, or canſt thou guide* Arcturus *with his Sons? Knoweſt thou the Ordinances of Heaven, canſt thou ſet the Dominion thereof in the Earth? Canſt thou lift up thy Voice to the Clouds, that abundance of Waters may cover thee? Canſt thou ſend Lightnings, that they may go, and ſay unto thee, here we are?* Plainly intimating, that, tho' theſe were Works above the Compaſs of all *human* Power, yet did they belong to the Guidance and Direction of God, who keeps the *Springs* of *Nature* in his Hand, and can turn them as he pleaſes; (*m*) for, ſince a great Part of the Happineſs or Miſeries of this Life is owing to the good or bad Influences of *natural* Cauſes, God cou'd not reward or puniſh; when

(*a*) *Bull*'s Ser. Vol. II. (*b*) Pſal. lxv. 2. (*c*) Dan. iv. 17. and Jer. xxxii. 19. (*d*) Amos iii. 6. (*e*) Prov. v. 21. (*f*) Pſal. xxxiii. 15. (*g*) Ver. 16. (*h*) *Sharp*'s Ser. Vol. I. (*i*) *Sherlock* on Divine Providence. (*k*) Eph. i. 11. (*l*) Job xxxviii. 31, 32. (*m*) *Sherlock* on Divine Providence.

when he promiſes *Health* and Plenty, or threatens *Peſtilence* and Famine, he cou'd not make good his Word, if he had not reſerv'd to himſelf a *Sovereign* Power over Nature.

Accidental. AND, in like manner, ſince, very frequently, (*a*) *the Race is not to the Swift, nor the Battle to the Strong, nor Bread to the Wiſe*, &c. *but Time and Chance happeneth to them all*; how cou'd God govern the World, and diſpoſe of Mens Lives and Fortunes, without having *Chance*, *i. e.* all unſeen, unknown, and ſurprizing *Accidents*, under his Controul? For, as the *Fate*, not only of Men and Families, but even of Kingdoms and Empires, the Succeſſes of War, and Changes of Government are ſo often determin'd, and brought about by *theſe*; if theſe were not under the Diſpoſal and Direction of God, ſome of the moſt remarkable Events in the World wou'd be exempted from his *Juriſdiction*.

And Moral. AND ſince (*b*) Men are generally the chief *Inſtruments* of all the Good and Evil, that happens to us in this World, inſomuch that, if God either rewards or puniſhes us, Men are uſually his *Miniſters*, to execute his *Vengeance*, or diſpenſe his *Bleſſings*; they wou'd never anſwer his Purpoſe, or execute his Will *effectually*, had he not an abſolute Command over all Mankind, ſo as to direct or bewilder their *Thoughts*, bridle or let looſe their *Paſſions*, proſper or infatuate their *Counſels*, confirm or intimidate their *Reſolutions*, and make all their Actions and Deſigns ſubſervient to himſelf, even contrary to their *Intentions*; *For (c) tho' there be many Devices in a Man's Heart, nevertheleſs the Counſel of the Lord that ſhall ſtand.*

THUS the Dominion of God extends to all his *Works*, and includes all Sorts of Cauſes, relating to human *Affairs*, in which Reſpect it is *univerſal*: But, beſides this, there is a *ſpecial* Government, with Regard to ſome particular Perſons and Tranſactions, and this, in like manner, he is known to exerciſe.

His particular *Government over Kings.* IN the Proverbs of *Solomon*, the Wiſdom of God is introduc'd, as delivering herſelf in theſe Words, — (*d*) *By me Kings reign, and Princes decree Juſtice: By me Princes rule, and Nobles, and even all the Judges of the Earth: Riches and Honour are with me.* For, as *publick* Bodies and Communities are of much more Importance, than *private* Perſons; ſo the Care of Heaven is more immediately concern'd in appointing the *Rulers*, that are to *preſide* over them, and even in governing thoſe, whoſe Province it is to govern others. Crowns and Scepters are not *fortuitous* Things: And, tho' God may ſometimes give *a King in his Wrath*, and place a Man, addicted to *tyrannick* Cruelty, over a Realm; yet, in that Caſe, the divine Conduct is viſible, becauſe *evil* Rulers are as *neceſſary*, and ſerve the Ends of Providence, (*viz.* in chaſtiſing either their own, or other rebellious Nations) as well as *good* ones; in which Senſe it is, that God calls the King of *Aſſyria*, *the* (*e*) *Rod of his Anger, and the Staff of his Indignation*, becauſe, contrary to his Intention, *(for he meaned not ſo, neither did his Heart think ſo)* he employed his cruel Diſpoſition, as an Inſtrument to puniſh the *Backſlidings* of his People. But, when the Inſtrument grew rebellious itſelf; *when* (*f*) *the Rod began to ſhake itſelf againſt him, that lifted it up; and the Staff to lift itſelf up, as if it were no Wood*; (as the Prophet continues the *Metaphor*) then came the Word, (*g*) *I will puniſh the Fruit of the ſtout Heart of the King of* Aſſyria, *and the Glory of his high Looks*; *for* (*h*) *God is Judge*, (ſays the *Pſalmiſt*) *he putteth down one, and ſetteth up another.*

In depoſing *and* exalting *them.* (*i*) *How art thou fallen from Heaven, O* Lucifer, *Son of the Morning? How art thou cut down to the Ground, who did weaken the Nation? For thou haſt ſaid in thine Heart, I will aſcend into Heaven, I will aſcend above the Heights of the Clouds, I will exalt my Throne above the Stars of God, I will be like the moſt high; yet thou ſhalt be brought down to Hell, to the Sides of the Pit. They, that ſee thee, ſhall narrowly look upon thee, and conſider thee, ſaying, is this the Man, that made the Earth to tremble, that did ſhake Kingdoms, that made the World as a Wilderneſs, and deſtroyed the Cities thereof?* This Downfal of the King of *Egypt* alarm'd the Attention, and affected the Minds of all, that were near it: And, in like manner, when God *(k) taketh the Simple out of the Duſt, and lifteth the Poor out of the Mire, that he may ſet him with the Princes, even with the Princes of his*

(*a*) Eccl. ix. 11. (*b*) *Sherlock* on Divine Providence. (*c*) Prov. xix. 21. (*d*) Prov. viii. 15. (*e*) Iſai. x. 5. (*f*) Ver. 15. (*g*) Ver. 12. (*h*) Pſal. lxxv. 7. (*i*) Iſai. xiv. 12, &c. (*k*) Pſal. cxiii. 6, 7.

his People, (*a*) *as he chose* David *his Servant*, *and took him away from the Sheepfolds*; when he endows a Man with ſuch diſtinguiſhing Qualities, as attract the Eyes of others, and recommend him to the Opportunities of Promotion; or when he proſpers the Arms of ſome ſmall *Potentate*, unjuſtly invaded by a *powerful* Neighbour, and, by ſome unexpected Chance in War, ſets him upon the Throne of his *degraded* Adverſary; in theſe, and many more Inſtances, it appears, that the *(b) Right Hand of the Lord has the Pre-eminence*; *the Right Hand of the Lord bringeth mighty Things to paſs*, *ſo that a Man ſhall ſay*, as there is a Puniſhment for the Wicked, *ſo verily there is a Reward for the Righteous*, *doubtleſs there is a God*, *that judgeth the Earth*.

Over States, *in* preſerving *or* puniſhing *them.*

IT is the Obſervation of *Cicero*, (*c*) in one of his Orations, *that their Commonwealth was more beholden to the Divine Help and Aſſiſtance, than to all the Counſels and Contrivances of Men.* As Communities, and Combinations of Men ſubſiſt only in this World, (for in that to come they are all ſwallowed up in one immenſe Kingdom, even the *Kingdom of the Lamb)* it hence becomes neceſſary for God to make the Earth the *Theatre* of his *political* Adminiſtration, and to let us ſee, how he depreſſes or advances Kingdoms, and turns about the Affairs and Fortunes of *States*, according as they deſerve his Favour or Indignation, in a very *wonderful* Manner: For, were it not for theſe his manifeſt *Interpoſitions*, we ſhou'd be apt to ſtop ſhort in our Reflections upon ſeveral Tranſactions in the World, and impute them to *natural* Cauſes, without carrying our Thoughts up to that *inviſible Hand*, which wields the vaſt *Machine*, and directs all its *Springs*, and Motions. That therefore we might not be unmindful of his continual Government in this Reſpect, God is ſometimes pleas'd, by *national* Judgments or Mercies, by publick Deliverances or Calamities, and by ſudden Changes and *Revolutions* in States, to awaken our Obſervation, "like a glaring Comet, hung up in "the Air, (as (*d*) one expreſſes it) whoſe "extraordinary Appearance and irregular "Motion ſhall ſooner lead our Thoughts "up to the *Author of Nature*, and imprint "a deeper Awe of him upon our Minds, "than the Light of the *whole Hoſt of* "*Heaven*, in orderly Array continually "moving round us."

The Meaſures *of his Government not* arbitrary.

THESE are ſome of the Acts of God's *providential* Government, both *ſpecial* and *univerſal*: And now, (to look into the *Rule* and *Meaſures* of it) altho' the *Pſalmiſt* declares, that *(e) whatſoever the Lord pleaſeth*, *that doth he*, *in Heaven*, *and in Earth*, *in the Sea*, *and all deep Places*; yet we may be ſatisfied, that he will never be pleas'd to do any thing, either in *Heaven or Earth*, but what is ſuggeſted by infinite *Goodneſs*, and in ſuch a *Method*, as is the Reſult of infinite *Wiſdom*, becauſe the ſame Author informs us, that (*f*) *the Lord loveth Righteouſneſs and Judgment*; *the Earth is full of his Goodneſs*; *and his tender Mercies are over all his Works.* To ſay, that God deals *arbitrarily* with any of his Creatures, without any Regard to Right or Wrong, or (*g*) to aſcribe to his *Power* any thing, that is unworthy of his other *Perfections*, any thing, that is inconſiſtent with the Wiſdom, the Goodneſs, or *moral* Rectitude of his Nature, is abſurdly to ſet the Attributes of the Deity at *Variance*, and to diſhonour his *true Character*, under the Pretence of magnifying his *Omnipotence*.

PRINCES of this World indeed are very ambitious of *arbitrary* Power, and generally act *tyrannically*, when they have attain'd it; but this is, becauſe they are *weak* and impotent. A Conſciouſneſs of their own *dependent* Condition, and a miſgiving Fear of *Harm* from others, put them upon exerting their utmoſt Ability, in executing their Wrath without Delay; but he, who is ſecure of his *All-ſufficiency*, abſolutely *independent*, and therefore incapable of Fear from any *adverſe* Power, can never be tempted to act contrary to what his *moral* Perfections (which are as inſeparable from him, as his *natural)* cannot but ſuggeſt. He, who is the ſole Lord and Proprietor of the Univerſe, and whoſe Power and Wiſdom can accompliſh whatever he intends, without doing the leaſt *Injuſtice*, can never be induc'd to do any Injury to his Creatures. *Power* in itſelf is a great and generous Principle, and inſpires Men with noble Thoughts; inſomuch, that it is always expected of Men in Power, that they ſhould have a *Greatneſs* and Generoſity of Mind proportion'd to it: And,

(*a*) Pſal. lxxviii. 71. (*b*) Pſal. cxviii. 16. (*c*) Pro *Rabirio*. (*d*) *Atterbury's* Ser. Vol. I.
(*e*) Pſal. cxxxv. 6. (*f*) Pſal. xxxiii. 5, &c. cxlv. 9. (*g*) *Abernethy's* Ser. Vol. I.

if Power, that little Power, which Men *have*, gives them ſo glorious a Character, what may we expect from the *perfect* and *abſolute* Power of God, whoſe Juſtice is *equal* to his Power, and whoſe Goodneſs (if we may ſo ſay of any of his Attributes) in reſpect of his Conduct towards Mankind, has a manifeſt *Pre-eminence*.

But wiſe *and* good.

THE Divine *Supremacy* is uncontroulable indeed, ſo that, (*a*) *who can ſtay God's Hand, or ſay unto him, what doſt thou?* But it is not on this that his *moral* Government of Mankind is founded, but on his abſolutely perfect Purity, Wiſdom, and Goodneſs. The *End* of his (*b*) Government therefore, is the univerſal Good and Happineſs of the rational Creation: The *Laws* of his Government are perfect *Truth and Righteouſneſs*, and ſuch as may induce a *rational* Service; and the *Power*, which he employs in the Adminiſtration of his Government, is exerciſed, not *arbitrarily*, but according to the moſt conſummate *Equity*; not in doing Violence or Wrong, but in treating all his Subjects, as *Children*, rather than *Vaſſals*: For, (*c*) *far be it from God, that he ſhou'd do Wickedneſs, or from the Almighty, that he ſhould commit Iniquity; for the Work of a Man ſhall he render unto him, and cauſe every Man to find according to his Ways. Yea, ſurely God will not do wickedly, neither will the Almighty pervert Judgment.*

The OBJECTION.

" (*d*) *RIGHTEOUS art thou, O Lord,*
" *when I plead with thee; yet*
" *let me talk with thee of thy Judgments.*
" *Wherefore doth the Way of the Wicked*
" *proſper? Wherefore are all they happy,*
" *that deal treacherouſly? Thou haſt planted*
" *them, yea they have taken root; they*
" *grow, yea they bring forth Fruit. Thou*
" *art near to their Mouth, and far from*
" *their Reins.* They *proſper in the*
" *World, (e) yea are mighty in Power;*
" *their Seed is eſtabliſh'd in their Sight*
" *with them, and their Offspring before*
" *their Eyes:* Whereas I, might *Job* have
" ſaid, (and queſtionleſs he alludeth to it)
" who have the divine Teſtimony itſelf,
" *(f) that there is none like me upon Earth,*
" *a perfect and upright Man, one, that*
" *feareth God, and eſcheweth Evil,* am, on
" a ſudden, ſtripp'd of all the Comforts of
" Life, and ſmitten with a ſore Diſeaſe.
" *(g) My ſighing comes before my Meat,*
" *and my Roarings are poured out like the*
" *Water*; ſo that I have Reaſon to *curſe*
" *the Day of my Birth*; and, to ſay of
" my Life, (*h*) *Verily, I have cleanſed my*
" *Heart in vain, and waſhed my Hands in*
" *Innocency.* This is ſtrange and unac-
" countable in the divine Proceeding, and
" acting with an *Arbitrarineſs* and *Partia-*
" *lity*, not becoming the ſupreme Being,
" ſuppoſing him the Ruler and Director of
" every Man's Fate: But, upon a different
" Suppoſition, that frequent Irregularities
" of this Kind ſhould happen in the Ad-
" miniſtration of human Affairs, is no
" great Wonder, ſince, to attend to every
" particular Perſon, and to take Cogni-
" zance how his State and Condition are
" adjuſted, is too *toilſome* and *laborious*, if
" not too *mean* and *unbecoming* an Office
" for the ſovereign Deity to be employ'd
" in. Some great and momentous Affairs
" he may think it worth his while per-
" haps to have an Eye to; but, for the
" *univerſal* Lord and Monarch of the
" World to trouble his Head with who
" is *high*, or who is *low*; who is *rich*, or
" who is *poor*; who is *well*, or who is *ſick*,
" in this ſmall Spot of his Creation; is an
" Employ ſo full of Buſtle and Diſtraction,
" as ſeems inconſiſtent with his Peace and
" Happineſs, and is certainly * *beneath his*
" *Majeſty* to execute. We may therefore
" reaſonably ſuppoſe, that this is a Buſineſs,
" which he tranſacts by *ſecond Cauſes*, or
" leaves

(*a*) Dan. iv. 35. (*b*) *Abernethy's* Ser. Vol. I. (*c*) Job xxxiv. 10, &c. (*d*) Jer. xii. 1, &c.
(*e*) Job xxi. 7, 8. (*f*) Job ii. 3. (*g*) Job iii. (*h*) Pſ. lxxiii. 13.

* Some of the beſt of the *Heathens* held, that God was happy in the *Contemplation* of himſelf, and his Perfections, and particularly his *Wiſdom* in framing the World, for which Reaſon he had no *Leiſure* to mind any Thing of an inferior Nature: *For, that the ſovereign Power, or Deity,* (ſays *Pliny*) *whatſoever it is, ſhou'd have Regard to Mankind, is a Vanity fit to be laugh'd at, for then the Godhead muſt be debas'd by too mean and manifold an Attendance or Miniſtry.* In the ſame Light does *Tully*, in one of his *Divine* Tracts, repreſent the Notions of the *Epicureans*. But this is the Reaſoning of Men, who meaſure God's Knowledge and Power by what they perceive in themſelves, and charge their own Weakneſs upon him. *Pliny's* Nat. Hiſt. Lib. I. Chap. 7. *Tully* de Nat. Deor. Lib. I. and *Edwards's* Body of the Chriſ. Relig. Vol. I.

" leaves to ſome of his inferior *Miniſters*; " who, being abſent from their Poſts, or " unable to take a Survey of every one, " may be the true Occaſion, why (*a*) *all* " *Things come alike to all*; *why there is one* " *Event to the Righteous, and to the Wicked*; " *to the Clean, and to the Unclean*; *to him* " *that ſacrificeth, and to him that ſacri-* " *ficeth not, and that, as is the Good, ſo is* " *the Sinner*; *and he that ſweareth, as he* " *that feareth an Oath.*

Anſwer'd, by ſhewing in what Manner God makes uſe of ſecond Cauſes.

GOD indeed, in his Dominion over the World, makes uſe of *ſecond Cauſes:* But then we account it a *Commendation* of his Government, that, while every Thing, in the *material* World, acts *neceſſarily*, and exerts its natural Powers, he can temper, ſuſpend, accelerate, and direct its Influences, without reverſing the *Laws* of Nature; and that, while every Thing in the *moral* World acts *voluntarily*, and according to the Bent of its Inclination, he can ſet Bounds to the *Paſſions*, regulate the *Affections*, controul the *Deſigns*, and over-rule the *Actions* of Mankind, to what Ends he pleaſes, without infringing their *Liberty of Choice.*

And employs his Angels in the Government of the World.

ANGELS are called his *miniſtring Spirits*; nor can we think it any *Derogation* to his Honour and Majeſty, to inveſt certain Beings, of exalted Powers and Perfections, with the Adminiſtration of his *providential Decrees*; or that they ſhould preſide over ſeveral Parts of the Univerſe, and, upon ſpecial Occaſions, be appointed to guard and attend upon Men, while he himſelf, (who alone is capable of it) informs and directs the Whole; but then we are to obſerve, that he delegates this Power, and makes theſe Appointments, not as earthly *Princes* conſtitute their *Deputies* out of mere *Neceſſity*, and becauſe they cannot rule without them; but becauſe theſe *Courtiers* of Heaven are Lovers of Mankind, and, as they delight to be converſant and employed about them, ſo whenever they are honour'd with a divine *Commiſſion*, they take pleaſure, and are fir'd with a kind of ſacred Emulation, in *chearfully* and *punctually* executing the high *Behеſts* of their great Creator; for which Reaſon they are repreſented in Scripture, as full of *Eyes*, furniſh'd with *Wings*, excellent in *Wiſdom*, and ſurpaſſing in *Strength*, in order to denote their Vigilance and Speed, their Capacity and Power, their Diligence and Alacrity, whenever they are ſent upon any *Expedition.*

That his Omnipotence,

THE Strength of human Governments indeed depends, in a great meaſure, upon the *Multitude* of Hands, and the *unanimous* Obedience and Aſſiſtance of Subjects, and this is the Reaſon, why they are oftentimes ſo *precarious* and *unſettled:* But with the *God of all Power and Might* it is not ſo. As he is the univerſal *Maker*, ſo he is the ſole *Regent* of all. (*b*) His *Hoſt* conſiſts of all his Creatures, *animate* and *inanimate:* His *Stores* are laid up, ſome in the *Bowels* of the Earth, ſome in the *Chambers* of the Deep, and ſome in the *Regions* of the Air, and, at his Nod, they diſcharge themſelves againſt the Rebellious, who, (*c*) *at the Voice of his Thunder, are afraid, and, at the Blaſting of the Breath of his Diſpleaſure, die, and are turned again to their Duſt.* So that nothing can hinder him from doing all his Pleaſure, *both in Heaven and Earth*, who hath all the *Movements* of Nature in his Hand, the *Diſpoſal* of all Events at his Will, and the *Hearts* of all Mankind in his keeping.

Omnipreſence,

WERE God indeed *confin'd* to the Regions of Heaven, there might be ſome Grounds to ſuſpect the *Univerſality* of his Dominion; but ſince his (*d*) Divine Preſence is properly a *vital Energy*, a *knowing Influence*, and *powerful Activity*, from whence no Place, no Creature, no Body, no Spirit is, in any Meaſure, exempt; 'tis not inconceivable, how it may act upon *all Things* at once, with the ſame Facility, as it acts upon *any one.* Our Mind, we perceive, directs our Body, and forms it into what Motions, Geſtures, and Poſitions it pleaſes. How it does this, we cannot tell, but we are conſcious to ourſelves it does it; and from thence we infer, that this Mind of ours is preſent, at once, to every Part of our *little World*; animates, with its conſtant Influences, each Particle of our *vital Clay*; and keeps a watchful Guard upon all the Avenues of our *Senſes*, at the ſame Time that it *preſides*, in a more eminent Degree, in the ſecret *Chamber* of our ſublimer Thoughts. And, in like manner, though Heaven be the Place, where the great *Monarch* of the World may be ſaid *to keep his Court*, and to diſplay greater and higher Degrees of his *Majeſty*, than in any other Part of his ample Dominions; yet why he may not be preſent, at once, in every Place, and actuate every Thing, even as the human Soul guides and influences each Part of

(*a*) Eccl. ix. 2. (*b*) *Moſs*'s Ser. Vol. (*c*) Pſ. civ. 7, 29. and xviii. 15. (*d*) *Marſhall*'s Ser. Vol.

of the human Body; and, *tho' (a) his Throne be in Heaven*, why he may not *look down from thence, and behold all the Sons of Men*, we cannot conceive.

And Omniſcience, *enable him to govern the World* alone.

(*b*) Look we but up, and behold that glorious *Luminary* in Heaven, the Sun, and we ſhall ſoon perceive how, in the ſame Moment, it diffuſes its Light and Heat into every Corner of the *wide Earth*, and peeps through every *Crevice* of every the moſt ſecret Place; and can we ſee this wonderful *diffuſive* Influence in a created Light, and not conceive a far more *extenſive* Efficacy in its great Creator? Our own Faculties may teach us this. Upon firſt opening our Eye, we find we can ſee to the *ſtarry* Heaven, tho' at a vaſt Diſtance from us; and is it not reaſonable then to conclude, that he, who enabled us to ſee from Earth to Heaven, can himſelf, with much more Facility, ſee from the higheſt Heaven to Earth? It were abſurd and *brutiſh*, ſays the Pſalmiſt, to think otherwiſe; for (*c*) *he, that planted the Ear, ſhall he not hear? He that formed the Eye, ſhall he not ſee? And he that teacheth Man Knowledge, ſhall not he know?*

Which is a Work not beneath his Majeſty.

These Perfections are *originally* in him; and his conferring ſome Portion of them upon us, not only gives him a Right to *rule* over us, but, as he will never neglect the Work of his own Hands, gives us likewiſe the *Privilege* of Protection under his Government, and a joyful Aſſurance of his intereſting himſelf continually in our Concerns. Pride and Arrogance, a ſcornful Diſtance, and Contempt of Inferiors may enter into the Character of ſome great Men; but they are abhorrent to the Nature of God, who, (*d*) *tho' he dwelleth on high, yet humbleth himſelf to behold the Things that are in Heaven and Earth*, and to interpoſe, not only in great and weighty Affairs, but in the moſt trivial and minute Matters, for this very Reaſon, becauſe the *ſmaller* the Matter is, the more it demonſtrates the *Greatneſs* of the Care, and the Vigilance of the Providence, that preſides over us. Well therefore might the Royal *Pſalmiſt* ſay, *Who is like unto the Lord our God?* The Kings and Rulers of this World are far from being *like* unto him. They ſpend their Days in *Eaſe* and *Indolence*, if not in *Luxury* and *Exceſs*; and, having committed the *Helm* of Affairs to the Direction of thoſe, who have been perhaps *Panders* to their Pleaſures, or *Sycophants* to their Pride, by their Difficulty of Acceſs, their Concealment from Sight, the Splendor of their Courts, the Terror of their Guards, and the Crowd of their Attendants, affect *State*, and love to *ape Majeſty*, which is never ſo truly great and God-like, as when it employs itſelf in doing good, and takes Pleaſure in the *condeſcenſive* Manner of doing it. So great is the Diſparity between the Conduct of our heavenly King, and his ſmall *Images* here on Earth, that well might the ſame Royal Author cry out again, (*e*) *Lord! what is Man, that thou art mindful of him, and the Son of Man, that thou viſiteſt him?* For one of theſe proud *Monarchs* to come under the Roof of a *Subject*, would be thought a Diminution of his *Grandeur*; and yet, *(f) thus ſaith the high and lofty one, that inhabiteth Eternity, whoſe Name is holy, I dwell in the high and holy Place, with him alſo, that is of a contrite and humble Spirit, to revive the Spirit of the Humble, and to revive the Heart of the contrite ones.*

In what Senſe God may be arbitary *without* Blame

St. *PAUL*, to ſhew the *Arbitrarineſs* of God, in electing ſome Nations, and rejecting others, (which holds every whit as well in his diſpoſing of Men's outward Condition and Circumſtances) makes uſe of a (*g*) known Similitude, *(h) Hath not the Potter Power over the Clay, of the ſame Lump to make one Veſſel unto Honour, and another unto Diſhonour?* (*i*) Out of the ſame Matter, capable of all Forms, he has made Bodies, *terreſtrial* and *celeſtial*, with all their different *Glories*, the ſhining *Conſtellations* of the Heavens, beautiful *Flowers*, and *Clods* of Earth. Among intelligent Beings, he hath conſtituted *ſuperior* and *inferior* Orders, ſome endowed with higher, and ſome with lower Powers, for which no Reaſon can be given, but that it ſo pleaſed the *ſovereign* Lord of all: And, in like manner, among *Mankind*, the Wiſdom of his Providence has ſeen fit to appoint a great Difference in many Reſpects: Some are rich, ſome poor; ſome weak, ſome ſtrong; ſome wiſe, others ignorant; ſome poſſeſſed of every thing, that their Hearts can deſire, whilſt others are daily (*k*) *fed with the Bread of Affliction*, (*l*) *and have Plen-*

(*a*) Pſ. xi. 45. and xxxiii. 13. (*b*) *Bull's* Ser. Vol. II. (*c*) Pſ. xciv. 8, &c. (*d*) Pſ cxiii. 5, 6. (*e*) Pſal. viii. 4. (*f*) Iſai. lvii. 15. (*g*) Jer. xviii. 6. Wiſd. xv. 7. (*h*) Rom. ix. 2 (*i*) *Abernethy's* Ser. Vol. I. (*k*) 2 Cor. xviii. 26. (*l*) Pſal. lxxx. 5.

Plenteouſneſs of Tears to drink: But, in all theſe Caſes, there can be no Pretence of *Injuſtice* done to any of them, becauſe they could have no *Rights*, capable of being violated, *prior* to their Being; nor is there any Unkindneſs ſhewn in their *Deſtiny*, ſo long as their State is preferable to *Non-exiſtence*.

As in the Sufferings *of the* Virtuous.

A virtuous good Man indeed, oppreſs'd with Poverty and Want, with Pain and Sickneſs, with Malice and Perſecution, is a very melancholy Conſideration: But then we muſt remember, that God, who *formed us in the Womb*, and knows the *Ingredients* of each Conſtitution, is the beſt Judge what State and Condition of Life will befit us, and foreſees at once, what Uſe we ſhould make of the various Circumſtances, that attend it: That a continued *Proſperity*, he finds, is apt to captivate and enſnare the Heart in the Love of the low Pleaſures of Life, and is indeed too dangerous a Bleſſing for him to venture, or for Man to manage: That a Senſe of their Virtue, and other Endowments may ſo elevate ſome Mens Minds, as to make it neceſſary for him to keep them humble and obedient, by the wholſome Diſcipline of *Adverſity* and *Diſtreſs*, even as he ſent to St. *Paul* (*a*) *a Meſſenger of Satan to buffet him, leſt he ſhould be exalted above Meaſure, through the abundance of Revelations* which were vouchſafed him: That *Afflictions*, he ſees, are *effectual*, not only to mortify our Vanity, and to wean our Affections from the World, but to brighten and crown all our Graces, (*b*) *knowing, that Tribulation worketh Patience, and Patience Experience, and Experience Hope, and Hope maketh us not aſhamed:* That, for this Purpoſe, he ſometimes ſingles out Perſons of known Merit, (even as he did *Job* of old,) and, like a wiſe Commander, places them in the *Front* and Heat of the Battle, that their Courage and Conduct may animate others, and be a Means to make them likewiſe *perfect by Sufferings:* That to ſee a good Man (*c*) bravely ſtruggling with Oppoſition and Adverſity, to ſee *Faith* triumph over *Senſe*, and the Strength of his *Grace* vanquiſh the Weakneſs of his *Nature*, is a glorious Spectacle, inſtructive to Men, and highly pleaſing to God: And laſtly, that, (*d*) *if we thus endure chaſtening, God dealeth with us as with Sons*, becauſe his Corrections are Tokens of his *paternal* Love and Kindneſs; and our (*e*) *light Affliction, which is but for a Moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal Weight of Glory:* Remembring this I ſay, we may ſoon perceive, that the *ſeeming* Evils and Calamities of Life, by our infinitely wiſe and gracious God, are converted into *real* Bleſſings, and that the Righteous have great Cauſe to *rejoice*, and to be *exceeding glad*, as well knowing, that, if they can but weather out the *Storms*, to which this Life is unavoidably expos'd, he will guide and conduct them by his bleſſed Spirit, till they arrive at *the Haven, where they would be*, and where the Senſe of the Felicity, they then enjoy, will be enhanced by Reflection on the many *Tempeſts* they met with in their Paſſage, but are all now blown over, and diſpers'd.

The Proſperity *of the Wicked.*

(*f*) *The Children of this World*, (according to our Saviour's Obſervation) *are in their Generation wiſer than the Children of Light:* Left alone to the natural Reſults of their own *Genius* and Application, they have a better Chance, in the *Scramble* of Life, to ſecure to themſelves an ample Share in the Felicities of Fortune, becauſe they lay out all the *Powers* of their Mind in the Purſuit of them; they employ all their *Skill* and Diligence in Endeavours to obtain them; they break through all *Reſtraints* of Honour and Juſtice, of Religion and Virtue, that may any way obſtruct their Acquiſition of them, and the Divine Providence very frequently permits them to accompliſh their Deſire; that their *opulent* Circumſtances might teach us the true *Eſtimate* of worldly Bleſſings, *viz.* that they are not *ſimply* and *abſolutely* good in themſelves, nor proportionate to the Merit or Demerit of *immortal* Creatures, and therefore given *promiſcuouſly* to any; that their *Greatneſs* and Oppreſſion might make them proper Inſtruments, in God's Hands, for the Puniſhment of others, who are as *wicked*, but not ſo powerful, as they, and for the Perſecution of the Righteous (*b*) *to try them, and to purge them, and to make them white*; that their Proſperity and Affluence might diſpoſe them to fill up the *Meaſure* of their Iniquity the ſooner, and their Exaltation and Eminence make their *Fall* more grievous, and their Ruin more conſpicuous; and that their preſent Impunity might put us always in mind of a *future State*, where all Irregularities

(*a*) 2 Cor. xii. 17. (*b*) Rom. v. 3. (*c*) St. *John*'s Ser. (*d*) Heb. xii. 7. (*e*) 2 Cor. iv. 17. (*f*) Luke xvi. 8. (*g*) Dan. xi. 35.

larities will be ſet right, and they inevitably meet with a Recompence for their flagitious Crimes. In the mean while, as no Man knows what paſſes within the Retirement of another's *Breaſt*, they may be wretched and miſerable amidſt all the Liberalities and Indulgences of Fortune. (*a*) That Part of their Circumſtances, which is *gay* and *ſplendid*, attracts and dazzles the Eyes of ſuch *Beholders*, as look not beyond fine *Appearances*, and ſuppoſe that all is well *within*, as it ſeems to be *without*: But their anxious *Fears*, their corroding *Cares*, their gloomy *Preſages*, their ſtinging *Reflections*, and ſad Apprehenſions of various Kinds, which laſh, and wound, and torment them in the deep *Silence* of the Night, and in the ſecret *Chambers* of their Heart, forbid them to be happy. And indeed, who can be happy with the heavy Puniſhment of their Iniquities hanging over their Heads, and ſuſtained only by the ſlender *Thread* of an uncertain Life, which it is in the Power of every little Accident to *ſnap aſunder*, and to change all their licentious Mirth and Jollity into a State of *Weeping, and Wailing, and Gnaſhing of Teeth for ever?* And if this be the Caſe of the *Ungodly*, then no Man ſurely can envy, the Accommodations of their Paſſage, however gawdy and ſumptuous, when the Way, they are taking, leads to *Deſtruction*, and muſt for ever baniſh them (*b*) *from the Preſence of the Lord, and from the Glory of his Power.*

And why their Lot is ſo promiſcuous.

THERE is ſome Truth however in the *wiſe Man's* Aphoriſm, *that all Things come alike to all.* Poverty and Riches, Sickneſs and Health, Honour and Diſgrace, Power and Subjection, various Accidents, and ſundry kinds of Death, are incident to the *Virtuous*, as well as the *Vicious: National* Judgments, and *epidemical* Diſtempers, ſweep away *promiſcuouſly* the Righteous and the Wicked. In the Courſe of God's *ordinary* Providence, it muſt needs be ſo; and, to order Matters otherwiſe, (*c*) would require conſtant *Miracles*, and, every Moment, the viſible Interpoſition of a divine Power. It is ſufficient, for the Vindication of God's Government, that bad Men are as often puniſh'd, and good Men as often rewarded, as the Nature of Things will permit; and that, on *particular Occaſions*, his ſignal Vengeance on notorious *Offenders*, and his diſtinguiſhing Bleſſings on his *Elect* proclaim the Juſtice of his Adminiſtration, and, by theſe Marks and Tokens, call upon every Spectator, *(d) to diſcern between the Righteous and the Wicked, between him that ſerveth God, and between him that ſerveth him not.* In a word, the preſent Situation of the World is ſuch, that (*e*) the *Wheat and the Tares* muſt neceſſarily *grow together*, partake of the ſame Influences of Heaven, and the ſame Diſtillations from above, to make them thrive and proſper. Since the Number of the Wicked ſo far exceeds the Righteous, a Diſcrimination *now* would, in a manner, depopulate the Earth. *The gathering up the Tares might root up the Wheat with them:* And therefore the Advice of the *Houſholder* is certainly the beſt; *Let them grow together, until the Harveſt, and, in the Time of Harveſt, I will ſay unto the Reapers, gather ye together firſt the Tares, and bind them into Bundles to burn them, but gather the Wheat into my Barn.*

DISSERTATION IV.

Man's Happineſs in God's Government of the World.

The Opinions of ſuch, as deny God's Government of the World.

THE Arguments, which prove the *Exiſtence* of a God, and his *Creation* of the Univerſe, do equally prove the Truth of his *Providence*, both in the *Preſervation* and *Government* of it; yet ſuch is the Perverſeneſs of ſome Mens Sentiments, that, tho' they allow, that the Beauty, Variety, Uſefulneſs, and Harmony of the Works of Nature ſhew, that, at firſt, the World was made by a *wiſe* and *powerful* Being, yet they will not admit that the *Continuance* and *Preſervation* of it is any Indication at all of its being *upheld*, and govern'd by the ſame omnipotent Wiſdom, and Counſel. The *Epicureans*, as well as the *Stoicks*, acknowledg'd the Being of a God; but then the *former* excluded him from all Direction and Rule in the World, as Matters, that would give too much *Diſturbance*, and were utterly inconſiſtent with that State of profound

(*a*) *Marſhall's* Ser. Vol. II. (*b*) 2 Theſſ. i. 9. (*c*) *Sherlock* on Divine Providence. (*d*) Mal. iii. 18. (*e*) Mat. xiii. 29, &c.

found *Eaſe* and *Indolence*, wherein they placed him; while the *latter* took the Government quite out of his Hand, and left it with a *ſtern* and *inexorable Fate*, that, without any Regard to Mankind, or any Conſideration of their Merit or Demerit, carried all Things before it by a violent *Impetuoſity*. The *Peripateticks*, to avoid theſe Abſurdities, placed God on his Throne, to ſuper-inſpect * ſome worldly Affairs; but then they aſcribed ſo much to *ſecond Cauſes*, that they left him little more to do, than to ſet the firſt *Wheel*, (as it were) a going, and ſo leave the reſt to move on as they *could*. Now each of theſe *Philoſophers* did properly *depoſe* God from his Empire, and made him no more than an unconcern'd *Spectator* of human Affairs: But, in doing of this, they little conſulted the Benefit of Mankind, (*a*) ſince to baniſh God's Providence and Government out of the World, is to baniſh all Joy, all Peace, all Hope, all Comfort, for ever, from every one, that has the Power of thinking.

The Comfort, and Benefits of believing a Providence.

(*b*) THE Belief of a God, at the Head of Nature, guiding its Courſe, ſuper-intending the World, and diſpoſing of all Events with perfect Wiſdom, and Goodneſs, raiſes an Idea of the moſt exact univerſal *Order*, which is the nobleſt and moſt delightful Subject of *Contemplation:* But what a gloomy diſmal *Scene* of *Horror*, and wild *Confuſion*, does the contrary Opinion preſent us with? (*c*) Angry *Elements* jarring with one another, and ready to put all Nature into *Convulſions*; † the *Planets* and other heavenly Bodies leaving their *Orbits*; the *Sun* wandring from its Courſe, to ſet the *Globe* on fire; the *Air* ingendring peſtilential *Vapours*, to empty the World of its Inhabitants; the *Sea* ſurpaſſing its Banks, to overſpread the Land with an *Inundation*; conſuming *Wars* depopulating whole Countries, and Mens unruly *Paſſions* plaguing and devouring one another: Well therefore might the *Pſalmiſt* ſay, (*d*) *the Lord is King, the Earth may be glad thereof, yea the Multitude of the Iſles may be glad thereof. Iſles in particular:* For, conſidering the *Convexity* and Roundneſs of the Waters, in reſpect of which (*e*) *they ſtand on an Heap* (as the ſame Author naturally expreſſes it) by the (*f*) common Laws of *Motion*, they wou'd, every Day, pour in a *Deluge*, inſtead of a *Tide*, upon our Shores, and drown all *England* at once, (*g*) did not *God ſet Bounds to them, which they ſhall not paſs, nor turn again to cover the Earth.*

UPON the Suppoſition of a God, that abſolutely governs both the Powers of Nature, and the Powers of Mankind, we may live like Men, and enjoy ourſelves with ſome Comfort in the World; for (*h*) this ſets every thing in a fair and amiable Light. It diffuſes *Peace* and Serenity through the Soul, ſooths its diſagreeable and uneaſy *Paſſions*, diſpoſes it to bear its proper Part in the univerſal *Harmony*, and to imitate the ruling Wiſdom and Benignity, which preſides over the Whole. Upon this Suppoſition, (*i*) every honeſt Man may find Reaſon enough to promiſe himſelf *Succeſs* in all his Undertakings, *Protection* in Dangers, *Support* in Afflictions, and *Relief* in his Wants; Reaſon enough both to *bear* contentedly whatever uneaſy Circumſtances he lies under, to *truſt* in God's Mercy for a Removal of them, and, in the mean time, to poſſeſs his Soul with a chearful *Dependence* on his Providence,

* I have often wonder'd at thoſe *Philoſophers*, who acknowledg'd a *Providence*, but wou'd not admit of God's peculiar Care of *all* his Creatures. *Some* confin'd his Government to the *Heavens*, but wou'd not extend it to this *lower* World; and yet this World needs it as much, and a great deal more, as being a *Scene* of Change and Corruption, of furious Luſts and Paſſions, which require Reſtraint. *Others*, who would allow that God's Government reach'd to this lower World, confin'd it to the *great* Affairs of *Kingdoms* and Commonwealths, and would not permit it to take any Care of *particular* Men and Families, unleſs they made ſome very conſiderable Figure in the World; as if Kingdoms and Commonwealths were not made up of *particular Men*, and particular *Families*; or as if God would take care of the *Whole*, without taking care of every *Part*. *Sherlock* on Divine Providence.

(*a*) *Sharp*'s Ser. Vol. I. (*b*) *Abernethy*'s Ser. Vol. II. (*c*) *Heylyn* on the Creed.

† It has been a receiv'd Opinion among ſome Philoſophers, that there is a *Plenum:* But Sir *Iſaac Newton* has in a manner demonſtrated, that there is a *Vacuum*, not only interſpers'd, but of a prodigious and almoſt incredible *Extent*, at the Diſtance of the Earth's *Semidiameter* from us. Now the being of a *Vacuum* muſt neceſſarily ſuppoſe an *immediate* divine Power to keep the *Syſtem* of the World in that Order, wherein we ſee it continues: For otherwiſe, by the *Principle* of *Gravitation*, inherent in every Part of Matter, all Bodies would preſs towards the *Center*, and, in a *Vacuum*, there can be nothing to hinder their *Tendency* towards it, 'till they come crowding one upon another: So that all the *Order* of Things wou'd ſoon be reduc'd to one confus'd *Heap*, or Maſs, unleſs ſome *immaterial* Power interpos'd to hinder it. *Jenkins*'s Reaſonableneſs of the Chriſt. Relig. Vol. II.

(*d*) Pſal. xcvii. 1. (*e*) Pſal. lxxviii. 13. (*f*) *Young*'s Ser. Vol. II. (*g*) Pſal. civ. 9. (*h*) *Abernethy*'s Ser. Vol. II. (*i*) *Sharp*'s Ser. Vol. II.

Providence, and a ſincere *Thankfulneſs* for the innumerable Benefits, he daily receives from his Hands. But now, upon the contrary Suppoſition, or the Thought of living in a *diſtracted* World, where *Confuſion* reigns, and Good and Evil happen *promiſcuouſly*, for want of an all-wiſe Direction to ſuper-intend human Affairs, and to make a Diſcrimination; this raiſes *Horror* and Deſperation in Mens Minds, *ſours* their Tempers, and makes them *diſpleas'd* both with themſelves, and every thing about them. It deſtroys the very Foundation of all rational *Confidence*, and indeed all rational Enjoyment, and takes away the principal and only effectual Support of *Patience* and Contentment under the Misfortunes, that are incident to this Life. In a word, remove God from the Government of the World, and the Direction of human Affairs, and Mankind will find in Danger no Refuge, in Affliction no Relief, in Proſperity no Comfort, in Adverſity no Hope, and every *thinking* Man muſt ſay, with the good Emperor *Antoninus*; "What have I to do to *live* in "a World, void of a God and Providence? "Or why ſhould I deſire to continue in "ſuch a Scene of Jumble, and wild Com-"buſtion?

As it eaſes our Troubles.

It is an Obſervation of holy *Job*, grafted upon Experience, that *(a) Man is born to Trouble, as the Sparks fly upwards.* (*b*) If we view him in the *weak* Eſtate, which uſhers him into the World, there is not ſo *helpleſs* a Creature in the Univerſe; or, take him at the beſt, when arriv'd to Years of Strength and *Maturity*, he is in no Condition to ſhift for himſelf, (*c*) but is liable to ſo many *Diſaſters without*, and ſo many *Diſorders within*; is ſo much expos'd to the Fury of the *Elements*, and the greater Fury of lawleſs and violent *Men*; finds ſo many *Snares* and Temptations planted in his Way; has ſo many *Hazards* and Hardſhips to encounter; ſo many *Difficulties*, which no Cunning can foreſee, no Foreſight can prevent, to ſurmount; ſuch a Number of Infirmities, Corruptions, and evil Habits to ſubdue in himſelf, and ſuch Force, Fraud, and Falſhood to withſtand in others; that were he depriv'd of the Protection of Divine Providence, he would be left utterly deſolate, and ſink down into the Depth of Sin, Sorrow, and Miſery, without any other *Influx*.

Relieves our Wants.

It is to be conſider'd farther, that Man, in his *natural* Eſtate, is not only expos'd to Dangers and Troubles, but ſurrounded with *Wants* innumerable, as having many *Deſires* that muſt be gratified, and many craving *Appetites* and *Affections*, that muſt be provided for, or they will ſadly torment us; in which Caſe, had he nothing to depend on, but his own Strength and Induſtry, how little would they avail him? Unſeen *Accidents*, and caſual *Events* very commonly diſappoint the moſt proper and promiſing Means of Succeſs; ſo that it would only be *(d) loſt Labour, that we haſten to riſe early, take late Reſt, and eat the Bread of Carefulneſs*, unleſs we have God's Aſſiſtance to ſecond our Endeavours, and to proſper *the Work, which we take in Hand*: But now, with the Bleſſing of God attending us, we may promiſe ourſelves a joyful Iſſue in all our Labours, and, whatever Objects we ſet our Hearts upon, whatever Bleſſings we have in view (if they be fit for us, and we for them) we ſhall in due Time aſſuredly attain them; for (*e*) *commit thy Way unto the Lord*, ſays the *Pſalmiſt, and he ſhall bring it to paſs; delight thou in the Lord, and he ſhall give thee thy Heart's Deſire, and (f) no good Thing ſhall be with-held from him, that walketh uprightly.*

And diſſipates our Fears.

These are ſome of the main *Benefits* that accrue to us from God's Government of the World; and, in the Strength of theſe we may aſk ourſelves theſe Queſtions. Are we apprehenſive of perilous Times, Commotions in the State, or the Deſolation of War in our Coaſts? God can change the Face of Things in a Moment. (*g*) *He breaketh the Bow, and ſnappeth the Spear aſunder*, and, as (*h*) he *ſtilleth the Raging of the Sea, ſo can he pacify the Madneſs of the People*; I will not therefore fear, (*i*) *though the Earth be moved, and though the Hills be carried into the midſt of the Sea, though the Waters thereof rage and ſwell, and though the Mountains ſhake at the Tempeſt of the ſame.* Do we fear the Perſecution of a malicious Enemy, that is too powerful for us? God can *over-rule* the angry Paſſions of Men, can either *ſweeten* them into *Kindneſs*, ſo as (*k*) *to make our Enemies be at Peace with us*, or, (*l*) *under the Shadow of his Wing*, cover us, *until their Tyranny be overpaſſed*; and therefore (*m*) *though an Hoſt ſhou'd encamp*

(*a*) Job v. 7. (*b*) *Moſs*'s Ser. Vol. V. (*c*) *Balguy*'s Ser. (*d*) Pſ. cxxvii. 3. (*e*) Pſ. xxxvii. 4, 5. (*f*) Pſ. lxxxiv. 12. (*g*) Pſ. xlvi. 9. (*h*) Pſ. lxv. 7. (*i*) Pſ. xlvi. 2, 3. (*k*) Pſ. Prov. xvi. 7. (*l*) Pſ. lvii. 1. (*m*) xxvii. 3.

camp againſt me, my Heart ſhall not fear, though War ſhould riſe againſt me, in this will I be confident. Are we in danger from the ſecret Contrivances of wicked and deſigning Men, who *(a) have laid a Snare for us, and are purpoſed to overthrow our Goings?* God *(b)* can diſappoint the Devices of the Crafty, ſo that their Hands ſhall not perform their Enterprize, for (*c*) *with him is Strength and Wiſdom, the Deceiv'd, and the Deceiver are his*; and therefore, in confidence of his Protection, (*d*) *I will lay me down in Peace, and take my Reſt, for it is thou, Lord, only, that makeſt me to dwell in Safety.* Is *Poverty* coming upon us like an *armed Man*, becauſe *(e)* the *Drought, the Blaſting, and the Mildew have deſtroyed our Labour, and made our Baſket and our Store fail us?* God has all the *Elements* at his Command. All fruitful Seaſons, as well as thoſe of *Scarceneſs*, are in his Hand: *(f) When he openeth it, he filleth all Things living with Plenteouſneſs*; and therefore, (*g*) *although the Fig-Tree ſhall not bloſſom, neither ſhall Fruit be in the Vine; although the Labour of the Olive ſhall fail, and the Fields ſhall yield no Meat; although the Flock ſhall be cut off from the Field, and there be no Herd in the Stall; yet will I rejoice in the Lord, and joy in the God of my Salvation.* Once more, are we ſeiz'd with a ſore *Diſeaſe*, and brought to the laſt great Conflict between *frail Mortality* and the *Prince of Terrors?* In this trying *Juncture*, in this momentous Hour, if we have not forſaken him, God will not deſert us, but ſtand by, and alleviate our Pains, revive our drooping Spirits, fill our Hearts with hidden Comforts, defend us from the Danger of the Enemy, and receive our departing Souls into the Arms of boundleſs Mercy; and therefore, *(h) though I walk through the Valley of the Shadow of Death, yet will I fear no Evil, for thou, Lord, art with me*; but will ſay to myſelf, *(i) Why art thou ſo full of Heavineſs, O my Soul, and why art thou ſo diſquieted within me? O put thy Truſt in God, who is the Help of my Countenance, and my God.*

THUS in all Tribulation and Anguiſh of Spirit, in all Danger of Soul and Body, in Proſperity and Adverſity, in the Hour of Death, and in the Day of Judgment, (*k*) *I will ſay unto God, thou art my Rock, my Fortreſs, and my Deliverer, my Strength, in whom I will truſt, my Buckler, the Horn of my Salvation, and my high Tower*; (every Thing, made either by Nature or Art for Man's Defence, is here alluded to) for (*l*) *whoſo dwelleth under the Defence of the moſt High, ſhall abide under the Shadow of the Almighty.* In a word, (*m*) the Belief of a God, ſuper-intending the World, is ſo neceſſary to the Comfort and Happineſs of human Life, that a wiſe Man could not but be heartily troubled to quit ſo pleaſing an *Error*, and to part with a *Deluſion* (even ſuppoſe it were one) which is apt to yield ſuch unſpeakable Satisfaction to the Mind.

(*n*) *I heard the Voice of a great Multitude, ſaying,* Alleluia, *for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth; let us be glad and rejoice, and give Honour to him*: For what abundant Reaſon have we for this holy Joy and Exultation, if we do but conſider that the univerſal *Governor* of the World is a good and gracious *Being*, who takes particular Care of every one of us; who loves us, and delights to do us good; who underſtands all our Wants, and is both able and willing to relieve and protect us, when all other *Powers* are combin'd againſt us? A *Governor*, who makes the Safety and Felicity of his *Subjects* his great and conſtant Aim, and is ſo far from dealing with them by any *capricious* Rules, or *arbitrary* Meaſures, that he requires nothing of them, but what is for their good; nothing but what they themſelves, if they were wiſe, would think it their Duty to do, even though he had not requir'd it? A *Governor, whoſe Eyes run to and fro* through every Corner of his vaſt *Dominion*, to inſpect all the Sons of Men, and to give to every one according to his Deſerts; and yet is ſo far from taking any *Advantage* of their Slips, or manifold Failings, that he *ſpareth, when they deſerve Puniſhment, and in the Midſt of Judgment, thinketh upon Mercy*? A *Governor*, who will not deſpiſe the low Eſtate of thoſe, that live under his Care, nor think it any Scorn to *(o) ſeek the Loſt*, to retrieve the Wandering, *to ſtrengthen the Sick, to bind up the Broken*, to wait upon the Tender and Weak, and *to carry the* Impotent *in* (*p*) his *Boſom*, as he is pleas'd to ſymbolize his

And is therefore great Matter of Joy *to us.*

(*a*) Pſal. cxl. 4, 5. (*b*) Job v. 12. (*c*) Job xii. 16. (*d*) Pſal. iv. 8. (*e*) Deut. xxviii. 17, 22. (*f*) Deut. cxlv. 6. (*g*) Heb. iii. 17. (*h*) Pſal. xxiii. 4. (*i*) Pſal. xlii. 6, 15. (*k*) Pſal. xviii. 2. (*l*) Pſal. xci. 1. (*m*) *Tillotſon*'s Ser. Vol. I. (*n*) Rev. xix. 6. (*o*) Ezek. xxxiv. 16. (*p*) Iſ. xl. 11.

Care for Man under the Compariſon of the good Shepherd. A *Governor*, laſtly, who, without any *Diſtinction*, maketh the whole Creation his *Family*; to whoſe Bounty all the Sons of Men are indebted for every *Morſel* they eat, for every *Drop* they drink, and for every *Rag* they wear; and who, not only in this Life giveth them all temporal Bleſſings *richly to enjoy*, but for all thoſe, *(a) who, by patient Continuance in well doing, ſeek for Glory and Honour, and Immortality*, in that which is to come, has provided *an (b) Inheritance, incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reſerv'd in Heaven for them.*

SECT. V. * Maker of Heaven and Earth.

The EXPOSITION.

A proper Creation, what.

BY *Heaven* and *Earth* we are to underſtand the *univerſal World:* For the ancient *Hebrews*, having no Word, in their Language, proper to expreſs the *World* by, made uſe of this *Circumlocution*, which ſpecifies the two *principal* Parts of it, and denotes all the Things, that are contained in them, whether they be *material* or *immaterial, viſible* or *inviſible:* And, by God's *making Heaven and Earth* is ſignified, either his *Production of the Matter*, whereof the the World was compos'd *out of Nothing*, which is termed a *proper Creation*; or his *Formation* of the ſeveral Parts of the *mundane Syſtem* out of this *primordial* Matter, which is call'd an *improper one.*

The Heathens *thought it* impoſſible.

THE Author to the *Hebrews* puts us in mind, that, *through Faith we underſtand that the Worlds were made by the Word of God, ſo that Things, which are ſeen, were not made of Things, which do appear*, i. e. were made out of Nothing by the Almighty *Fiat:* But many great Men, who were not aſſiſted by a Divine *Revelation*, were of a different Opinion, and laid it down for a certain *Maxim* in Philoſophy, † *that every Thing, which was produc'd, had neceſſarily ſome pre-exiſtent Matter, out of which it was form'd.* (*c*) That the *exterior* and viſible *Form* of Matter might be *chang'd*, they readily granted, becauſe they found themſelves able to do it in many Inſtances; nay, that the *inward* Frame of Things might admit of *Alterations*, and thereby the ſame *Subſtance* paſs into a *Variety* of different *Appearances*, they did not utterly deny,

(*a*) Rom. ii. 7. (*b*) 1 Pet. i. 4.

* This Branch of the Article was not inſerted in the firſt *Copies* of the *Apoſtles*, or *Roman* Creed; for the *ancient* Expoſitors of it take no Notice of it, becauſe, very probably, the *Roman* Church was not, at that Time, infeſted with the *Hereſies*, againſt which it ſeems to be levell'd. *Simon Magus*, the firſt *Heretick*, taught, that the World was made by *Angels*, and ſo did his Succeſſor *Menander*. *Cerdan* and *Marcion* introduc'd two *Principles*, not only *diſtinct*, but contrary to each other; the *one* the Author of all the *Good*, and the *other*, of all the *Bad*, that happen'd; and to this *latter* they aſcrib'd the Creation of the World. 'Tis very likely therefore, that, in oppoſition to ſuch *erroneous* Tenets, when once they came to get footing in the *Roman* Church, the Clauſe, wherein we profeſs, that the *ſupreme* God was the only *Maker of Heaven and Earth*, was thought proper to be added. This is the Opinion of ſome conſiderable Men: But it ſeems more probable, that, as the Generality of *Heathens* maintain'd, that the World was *eternal*, or the Work of *Chance*, made out of *pre-exiſtent* Matter, and not *created* by God out of *Nothing*, whenever any were converted to the Chriſtian Faith, in the Repetition of their Creed they were requir'd, more eſpecially, to profeſs — that they believ'd in *one God Almighty, the Creator of Heaven and Earth*. This was a Doctrine, that we find the Apoſtle inculcating to his *Gentile* Converts, Acts xiv. 14. Acts xv. 23. 1 Cor. viii. 6. And therefore we may preſume, that, from the Times of the Apoſtles this was a Branch of the *original* Creed, and not occaſionally inſerted in it; and that every *Proſelyte* to the Chriſtian Religion, in the Senſe of the *Pſalmiſt*, was bound to acknowledge, *that the Gods of the Nations were Idols, but that it is the Lord, who made the Heavens*, Pſal. xcvi. 5. *Nicholls* on the Art. *Grabe*'s Notes upon Bp *Bull*'s Judgment of the Cath. Church, and *Barrow* on the Creed.

(*c*) *Abernethy*'s Ser. Vol. I.

† *The Creation of the World out of nothing*, gave that Diſguſt to *Epicurus*, that it ſet him upon the Scent of *atheiſtical* Opinions to get rid of it: For, (as the Story tells) hearing a *Grammarian*, whoſe Scholar he was, upon a certain Occaſion explaining ſome Verſes of *Heſiod* in his *Theogenia*, importing

——— The Chaos firſt was form'd, and then
The ſpacious Earth; ——

he asked very pertly, that, if the Earth was made out of the *Chaos*, what was the *Chaos* made out of? At which Queſtion the *Grammarian* being confounded, made Anſwer, that it was not his Province to teach ſuch Things, but that of *Philoſophers*; upon which *Epicurus* left the *Grammarian*, and betook himſelf to the Study of Philoſophy. Diog. Laert. vit. Epic.

deny, becauſe they ſaw daily Examples of this Kind in *natural Generation* and *Corruption:* But, that any Thing ſhould ariſe out of *Nothing*, or, what had no Exiſtence before be brought into Being without any previous Matter, this was ſo incongruous with other *Cauſes*, and ſo far beyond any *Activity*, they perceiv'd either in themſelves or others, that they held it abſolutely *impoſſible*.

But it is not ſo to God.

(*a*) THAT *Matter* indeed did not produce itſelf, or that all *Subſtances* did not emerge out of an univerſal *Nothing*, we readily grant; and, in this Senſe, we embrace the *Maxim*, that *Nothing can proceed from Nothing*; but then we aſſert, that the Creation of the World out of Nothing was by *Something*, and by Something, which includes in its Nature a *neceſſary Exiſtence*, and a Perfection of Power, that is able to do every thing, that implies not a *Contradiction*. *To be* indeed, and *not to be* at the *ſame* Time, implies a Contradiction; but *not to be*, and *to be* at different Times, implies none: And the Reaſon is, becauſe the *not being* of a Thing, in this Inſtant, does not exclude it from *being* in *another*, when God thinks fit to call it into Being. Now what Appearance of Abſurdity is there, I pray, in ſuppoſing, that Matter, which is ſo very *paſſive*, and liable to ſo many Alterations, ſhould *emerge* out of Nothing, or begin to exiſt, by the Efficacy of a *powerful* Agent. (*b*) We can hardly think it repugnant to the *Principles* of Reaſon, that *infinite* Power ſhould raiſe an *Inſect* into Being, without any *previous* Matter to work upon; and yet, if we can ſuppoſe, that infinite Power can make an Inſect, it may, with the ſame *Facility*, produce a *World*, out of Nothing.

It implies no Contradiction.

A Power of creating therefore, *i. e.* of bringing Things into Being from a State of Non-exiſtence, is imply'd in the very Notion of a *Deity:* And tho' we cannot perfectly comprehend how this mighty Work is effected, yet, if we reflect upon ourſelves, and our own *Perſonality*, we cannot but perceive, that we have within us a convincing Proof of it. Whoever conſiders himſelf, muſt allow, that a Time was, when he was not, (for his *eternal* Exiſtence is contrary to common Senſe, and needs no *Refutation*) that at a certain Time he began to exiſt; and that his Exiſtence has not been of any long Duration: And, as he cannot ſuppoſe, that he began to be of *himſelf*, ſo he muſt neceſſarily have recourſe to another *Cauſe*, even the *Fountain* and Original of all Being. (*c*) God therefore, he concludes, is the Creator of his *Soul:* For, my Heart I cannot imagine, why there ſhould be more Difficulty in conceiving, that God created *Brute*, *ſenſeleſs* Matter, than that he form'd an *intelligent Subſtance*, whoſe noble Operations of *Cogitation*, *Volition*, &c. ſet it vaſtly above the Rank of any *material* Exiſtence.

And ſome Images of it are found in ourſelves.

NAY, if we attend to the excellent Operations of our *Minds*, we cannot but find ſomething *reſemblant* in them to what we are now conſidering in Almighty God. They cannot indeed produce new *Subſtances*; but new *Ideas*, new Sentiments, new Schemes, new Purpoſes, new Determinations, &c. theſe they can raiſe up at Pleaſure, in an Inſtant, without any preexiſtent Matter, and yet theſe are Things, that have a real Exiſtence. The *Philoſopher* therefore, who deprives God of his *creative* Power, muſt needs be *ſelf-condemn'd*, becauſe, while he denies *this* to the *Omnipotent*, he is pleaſing himſelf with doing ſomething *analagous* to it. By a *lucky* Concourſe of *Atoms*, or the more *regular* Diſpoſition of *Matter* and *Motion*, he raiſes his *Hypotheſis*, forms an *imaginary* World to himſelf, and, by a kind of *mental* Creation, makes every Thing *riſe*, as he calls for it; *move* as he directs it; and *take up* the Place, that he aſſigns it in the *Syſtem*; and yet, all this Time, he never once remembers, that *God is as able to create a World in Reality, as he is to do it in Imagination.* In a word, it is one of the *eſſential* Attributes belonging to the Supreme Being, that he is *omnipotent*; and 'tis very reaſonable for us to believe, that our *finite* Underſtandings cannot comprehend the utmoſt *Extent* of Omnipotence: Tho' therefore, the *making of Something out of Nothing*, does argue an inconceivable *Stretch* of Power, yet, ſince there is no Contradiction in the *Poſition*, and ſince in ourſelves we find ſomething *reſemblant* of it to make it more credible, we ought to acquieſce in this Perſuaſion, without diſputing the Power of God, which we all allow to be *incomprehenſible*.

THAT

(*a*) *Bentley*'s Ser. at *Boyle*'s Lect. (*b*) *Stillingfleet*'s Orig. Sacræ. (*c*) *Abernethy*'s Ser. Vol. I.

The Things *that were made out of Nothing.*

THAT the Empyræum, or *Heaven of Heavens* in Scripture Phraſe, and the *primordial* Maſs of Matter, commonly called the *Chaos*, were created before the *Hexameron*, or the Six Days Work, which *Moſes* deſcribes, moſt Writers upon the Subject are agreed; but then they are at ſome Variance concerning the Time of the Formation of *Angels*. Thoſe, that are for reducing them within the Six Days Work, alledge ſundry Paſſages of Scripture, and, in that *Recapitulation*, where it is ſaid, that (*a*) *thus the Heaven and the Earth were finiſhed, and all the Hoſt of them*; by the *Hoſt of Heaven* they mean the *Angels*, thoſe *Miniſters of God, who do his Pleaſure*: But it is to be obſerved, that, as *Moſes*, in the whole Hiſtory of the Creation, never once makes Mention of *Angels*, by this *Hoſt of Heaven* may equally be intended the *Sun*, *Moon* and *Stars*, which are frequently ſo-ſtiled in Scripture, and then the Angels may not at all be included in the *Moſaic* Creation, but had their Exiſtence rather given them ſome Time before the *material* World began. However this be, 'tis certain, that it was not until the *Sixth Day*, (when, by the Care and Providence of God, * all Things were provided for his Reception and Entertainment) that *Man* was created, his Body from the Duſt of the Ground, and his Soul immediately from God. For, by his *Breathing into him the Breath of Life*, muſt be underſtood his infuſing a rational and immortal Soul, or a *ſpiritual Subſtance*, though not any Part of *himſelf*, (ſince the divine Nature is indiviſible) and therefore intirely made out of Nothing. But whether, at the ſame Time, he created thoſe *Myriads* of other Souls, which, in the Courſe of this Life, were to inhabit human Bodies, or whether he has ever ſince continued to create them, at the Inſtant, that their reſpective Bodies are in a proper *Diſpoſition* to be inform'd by them, this is a *Speculation*, that our bleſſed Saviour, when queſtioned by the *Jews*, (*b*) *Whether the Man, that was born blind, had himſelf ſinned, or his Parents*, did not think fit to determine, though he had a fair Opportunity of doing it. Of all thoſe *Beings* however, which were properly produced *out of Nothing*, we muſt obſerve, that their Formation was not *progreſſive*, but *inſtantaneous*; for when God ſpake the Word that they ſhould exiſt, as there was nothing either to oppoſe his Command, or retard the Execution of it, no *Medium* between Non-exiſtence and a State of Exiſtence, they muſt of Neceſſity have inſtantly ſtarted up into Being, in the full Perfection of their Natures.

An Improper *Creation what.*

BUT, beſides this *ſudden* and *inſtantaneous* Production of many Kinds and Subſtances out of no pre-exiſtent Matter, which is *proper* or *immediate Creation*; (*c*) God's *diſpoſing* of all Things into the *regular* Forms we ſee, and, out of *rude* and incompetent *Materials*, framing them into vaſt and beautiful *Syſtems*, conſiſting of an infinite *Variety* of Parts, all placed in the moſt exact *Order*, and all conſpiring to make one harmonious *Whole*, has uſually gone (though but in a *ſecondary* Senſe) under the ſame Denomination.

God's Creation of the Heavens.

(*d*) THE *Primitive Chaos* (as the Scripture ſeems to repreſent it) was a fluid *Maſs*, wherein were the *Materials* and Ingredients of all Bodies, but *jumbled* together in a ſtrange promiſcuous Manner, ſo that heavy and light, denſe and rare, fluid and ſolid Particles, Fire, Air, Water and Earth, were every one in every Place, and all in a wild *Confuſion* and Diſorder. Now out of this diſorderly and confuſed Maſs, who was it, that by a Word's ſpeaking, merely by ſaying, *Let there*

* Thus, when the *Light* had been, for ſome Time, penetrating and clarifying the dark and thick *Atmoſphere*; when the *Air* was freed from its noiſome *Vapours*, and became pure, and clear, and fit for his *Reſpiration*; when the *Waters* were ſo diſpos'd, as to miniſter to his Neceſſities, by Miſts and Dews from *Heaven*, and by Springs and Rivers from the *Earth*; when the *Surface* of the Earth was become dry, and ſolid for his *Support*, and cover'd over with Trees, Shrubs, Plants, Herbs, Graſs, and Flowers, for his *Suſtenance* and Delight; when the glorious *Firmament* of Heaven, and the beautiful *Syſtem* of the Sun, Moon, and Stars was laid open to his *Contemplation*, and, by their powerful *Influences*, appointed to diſtinguiſh the *Seaſons*, and make the World a fruitful and delicious Habitation for him; when, laſtly, all Sort of *Animals*, in the Seas, in the Air, and on the Earth, were ſo order'd and diſpos'd, as to contribute, in their ſeveral Capacities, to his *Benefit* and *Delight*; 'twas *then*, and not till then, that Man was created, and introduc'd into the World; *then*, and not before, that he was conſtituted the *Lord* and *Governor* of the Whole. *Whiſton*'s Theory in the Solutions.

(*a*) Gen. ii. 1, 2. (*b*) John ix. 2. (*c*) *Abernethy*'s Serm. Vol. I. (*d*) *Burnet* and *Whiſton*'s Theories.

there be Light, made all the bright and radiant Parts of it ſeparate themſelves from the reſt, and, as they naturally mounted up, meet all together with one Conſent, (as it were) and there form a large *compact* Body of Fire, to ſhed its kind Rays and Influences upon the Inhabitants of this leſſer *Globe*? Who choſe for it ſo commodious a *Situation* from the Earth, as to make it the great Inſtrument of Life and Vegetation, and gave it a *Temperature* ſuited to our Uſes, ſo as neither to *ſcorch* us with immoderate Heat, nor *ſtarve* us with exceſſive Cold, which it muſt have done, had it been placed either a *nearer* or *further* Diſtance from us? Who made the *groſſer* Parts of the *Chaotick* Subſtance retire and ſubſide, and ſo conſtitute the Bodies of the ſeveral *Planets*, that belong to the *Solar* Syſtem, and ſettle the wonderful Proportion of the *annual* and *diurnal* Motion of the Earth, for the Diſtinction of Light and Darkneſs, and for the regular Variation of *Seaſons*? Who (*a*) accommodated the *Denſities* of the *Planets* to their *Diſtances* from the Sun, and conſequently to the *Degree* of Heat, that they were to bear; and ſo adjuſted the Motion of the Moon as to help us to divide our Time, and, by illuminating the Air, to take away, in ſome meaſure, the diſconſolate Darkneſs of our Winter Nights? Who hath directed the wonderful Courſe of the *Comets*, and all along preſerv'd the ſeveral *Syſtems*, and the ſeveral Planets and Comets in the ſame Syſtem, from falling foul upon one another? Who has made the *Expanſion* of the *Air* ſo *thin* and tranſparent, that the Rays of Light pierce through it in an Inſtant, yet ſo *ſtrong* and ſubſtantial, as to be able to ſupport the *winged Tribe*, that are appointed to move in it? And who placed there the Clouds for Rain, the Winds for Health and Traffick, and made it a Repoſitory for Thunder, Lightning, and Tempeſts, to purify the Region wherein we breathe, and to conſume the Vapours, that would otherwiſe annoy us? *(b) Aſk now the Beaſts, and they will teach thee; and the Fowls of the Air, and they will tell thee; or ſpeak to the the Earth, and it will tell thee; and the Fiſhes of the Sea, ſhall declare unto thee; who knoweth not, in all theſe Things, that the Hand of the Lord hath wrought them?*

NAY, not only *(c) the Heavens declare the Glory of God, and the Firmament ſheweth his Handy-work*, but all the Herbs, Plants, Flowers, and other Vegetables, that are ſeen upon the *Surface* of the Earth; all the Metals, Minerals, and other Foſſils that are found in the *Bowels* of it; all the Beaſts, Birds, and other Animals, (from the *Mite* to the *Elephant*) that *inhabit* it; all Fowl, Fiſhes, and other Creatures, (from the little *Minny* to the mountainous *Whale*) that are diſcover'd in the *Waters*, and in the great Deep, together with the curious Frame and wonderful Inſtinct of each of theſe Species; not to ſay any Thing of *Man*, the appointed Lord of all, the amazing Texture of his Body, the noble Faculties of his Soul, and that inconceivable Union and Conjunction, which interferes between them: Theſe, and many more Appearances in Nature, in the Words of the *Pſalmiſt*, proclaim the Glory of their Maker: (*d*) *O Lord how manifold are thy Works, in Wiſdom haſt thou made them; all the Earth is full of thy Riches!* And the Earth,

AFTER this Review (tho' a very imperfect one) of the admirable *Contrivance* of natural Things, it were needleſs to produce *(e)* the Teſtimony of the moſt ancient Nations, *Egyptians*, *Phœnicians*, *&c.* * of the greateſt Philoſophers among the *Greeks*, ſuch as *Thales*, *Pytha-*

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(*a*) *Clarke*'s Ser. at *Boyle*'s Lect. and *Ray* on the Creation. (*b*) Job xii. 7. (*c*) Pſal. xix. 1. (*d*) Pſal. civ. 24. (*e*) Vide *Tillotſon*'s Ser. Vol. I. *Wilkins*'s Nat. Relig. and *Grotius* de Veritate Chr. Relig. Lib. I.

* It may not be amiſs, upon this Occaſion, to mention ſome of the *Doctrines*, which they advanced. Thus *Mercurius Triſmegiſtus* not only affirms, that God made the World, but that he made it by his *Word*; that he did only ſay, *Let the Sun ariſe*, and preſently the Sun ſhined on the Face of the Earth; but that, by the powerful Efficacy of the ſame *Word*, the *Elements* were diſtinguiſhed, the *Heavens* beautified with Stars, and the *Earth* adorned with Herbs, and Plants of ſeveral Kinds, as his Words are cited by St. *Cyril* cont. *Julian*, Lib. 2. *Thales*, one of the wiſe Men of *Greece*, who had ſpent ſome Part of his Time in *Egypt*, and was the *firſt* who brought the Knowledge of divine Matters among his Countrymen, makes the Element of *Water* the firſt *Matter*, from whence the World was produced, and calls *God the Mind*, or intelligent Principle, *which faſhioned all Things out of it*, (as *Tully*, *De Nat. Deorum*, Lib. 1. informs us) and herein he exactly agrees with *Moſes's* Account of the Creation, *viz.* that *the Spirit of God moved upon the Face of the Waters*, which St *Peter* thus expreſſes, *By the Word of God the Heavens and the Earth were of old* conſtituted, and made of Water, and not *ſtanding out of the Water*, as our *Tranſlation* renders it. *Plato*, whoſe Words are a little dubious upon this Point, is ſuppos'd by ſome to have inclin'd to the Opinion of the *World's Eternity*; but, beſides that this is one of the great Controverſies between him and *Ariſtotle*, *Plutarch*, who was well verſed in his Writings, clears him of this Imputation, and poſitively affirms, that in

Pythagoras, &c. and the moſt renowned Perſons for Learning and Ingenuity among the *Romans*, ſuch as *Seneca*, *Cicero*, and particularly *Ovid*, who gives us as plain a Deſcription of the *Creation* of the World, as if he had been acquainted with the Books of *Moſes* himſelf: What I think more material to enquire into, is, the Time *when*, the Manner *how*, and the Reaſons *for which* this ſtupendous Fabrick of the World was made.

The Time when.

FROM the natural Notions we have of God's *Goodneſs*, which might induce him at firſt to make the World, we can form no Argument concerning the Time of its *Commencement*; for, as his Goodneſs was at all Times the ſame, it might, at one Time, as well as another (to ſpeak in the manner of Men) prompt him to ſet about the Work. Since therefore *(a)* there could be nothing in God to *fix* the Creation of the World more to one Time than another, or to determine, why it ſhould begin *ſooner* or *later*, this whole Affair muſt be purely *arbitrary*, and abſolutely at God's ſovereign Pleaſure and Diſpoſal, unleſs, we can ſuppoſe ſome Event intervening, that might determine his Will.

Now if we may imagine, that, before the Creation, which *Moſes* relates, God made the *Empyreal* Heaven, (and with it an *innumerable* Company of Angels) for the Place of his more immediate *Reſidence*; that ſome of theſe Angels, out of a Spirit of Pride, and over-weaning Conceit of their own Excellencies, revolted from God, and *(b) ſinned*, for which *they were caſt down to Hell, and deliver'd into Chains of Darkneſs, to be reſerv'd unto Judgment*; and that, (to repair this Loſs, and, in a proper Time, to repleniſh Heaven with new Inhabitants) God intended another *Race* of Creatures, and, thereupon, firſt order'd the *Chaos* into Being, and then form'd it into a curious Habitation for them, until the End and Conſummation of all Things: If we may ſuppoſe all this, I ſay, we have Grounds to infer, that the *Fall* of Angels *occaſionally* made way for Man's Creation, and that the Formation of the *terraqueous* Globe, which we were to inhabit, might, in a ſhort Space of Time, be ſubſequent to it.

IF the World then had a *Beginning*, and much about the Time, when *Man* was firſt created, 'tis reaſonable to expect, that ſo remarkable a Thing, as this, ſhould be recorded in ſome of the moſt *ancient* Hiſtories, in order to perpetuate its Memory. *(c)* Now in the Hiſtory of *Moſes*, which is generally acknowledged to be the moſt ancient Book in the World, and has always been eſteem'd of *(d)* great Authority among *heathen* Writers, we have a plain, brief, and unaffected Account of the Beginning of the World, and of its Creation by God, which, upon a moderate Computation, (for there

in his *Book*, inſcribed *Timæus*, he treats of the World's Creation, as the main Scope and Subject of that Diſcourſe. *Ariſtotle*, though in his Books of *Phyſicks*, or natural Philoſophy, he labours to maintain the *World's Eternity*, in his *Metaphyſicks*, where he treats of *abſtracted Notions*, he expreſſes himſelf in this Manner, *Whoever affirms, that God is the Cauſe and Author, not only of all living Creatures, but even of Nature itſelf, and of the univerſal World, and the Courſe thereof, ſpeaks like a ſober-minded Man, and that they, who ſay otherwiſe, are raſh and unadviſed Perſons:* And *Theophraſtus*, who was a great Follower of *Ariſtotle*, not only aſſerts, that the World was made by God, but that it was made *of Nothing*, no precedent or pre-exiſting Matter. To come now to the *Romans*, *Varro*, one of the moſt ancient, and moſt learned of them, reckons the firſt *Period* or *Æra* (at which he begins all his Computations) *from the Creation* of the World, and makes it the general Opinion both of *Zeno*, and the *Stoicks, that the World had a Beginning, and ſhould have an End.* *Cicero*, though an *Academick*, and, conſequently a *Sceptick* in all Points of *Controverſy*, does yet conclude, *that God made Man, and furniſhed him with thoſe Excellencies, which he poſſeſſes; and that the World, the Sea, and Earth, are ſubject to his Command*, De Nat. Deorum, Lib. II. *Seneca* is poſitive, that God *created all the World, yea, and Man himſelf*, and accounts it *Loſs* of Time to make any farther Enquiry about the *Origin* of Things, *who made them, or did at firſt extract them out of the common Maſs, or Chaos, where before they lay*, De vita Beat. Lib. II. And (to conclude with two *Latin* Poets) *Ovid* (*Met.* Lib. I) ſpeaks in plain Terms,

But God, or Nature, while they thus contend,
To theſe inteſtine Diſcords put an End:
The groſſer Air ſunk from ætherial Heav'n,
The Earth from Air, and Seas from Earth were driv'n. DRYDEN's Tranſl.

Which *Virgil* (Æneid VI.) expreſſes by the Word *Spiritus*, and *Mens*, in which the ancient Philoſophers were wont to conceal the Name of God.

Firſt Heaven and Earth, and Ocean's liquid Plains,
The Moon's bright Globe, the Sun, and ſhining Stars
A *Soul* within enlivens, and a *Mind*,
Diffus'd thro' all its Parts, the general Maſs
Invigorates, and mingles with the Whole. TRAP's Tranſl.

(a) Jenkins's Reaſonableneſs, Vol. II. *(b)* 2 Pet. ii. 4. *(c) Wilkins*'s Nat. Relig. *(d)* Vide Joſep. contra Appion.

there is ſome Difference between *Jews* and *Chriſtians* in this Particular) was, at this Time of my writing, not above *Five Thouſand, ſeven Hundred, and forty-ſix* Years ago.

The Manner how.

BY, whoſe *Miniſtry*, or Co-operation, the Almighty performed this immenſe Work, St. *Paul* has taken Care to inform us, in letting us know, that by his Son *(a) God made the Worlds*, and *(b) created all Things by* Jeſus Chriſt; and therefore, in his Epiſtle to the *Coloſſians*, we find him enumerating the whole Complex of Beings: *(c) By him were all Things created*, ſays he, *that are in Heaven, or that are in Earth, viſible and inviſible; whether they be Thrones, or Dominions, or Principalities, or Powers, all Things were created by him.* The Heavens, and all the Hoſt of them, were, in all Probability, (as we hinted before) made in an *Inſtant*, becauſe there were then perhaps no other *Creatures*, to whom God might *diſplay* the Glory of his Works; and, as they were made in an Inſtant, we have little or no Perception of the Manner, wherein they were made: But now, in the *gradual* Progreſs of the Earth's Formation, we ſee, as it were, every Thing ariſing out of the confus'd *Maſs*; firſt the *ſimple* Elements, and then the *compounded*, and more curious Creatures; and are led on, Step by Step, full of Wonder and Admiration, until we perceive the *Whole* compleated. Nor can we imagine, that the Angels themſelves, whoſe Faculties are *finite* (how far ſo ever they may excel ours) could have ever had that *full* Comprehenſion of this ſtupendous Work, and, conſequently, that cogent Reaſon to *(d) ſing together, and ſhout for Joy*, had the World, all at once, ſtarted forth into the ſame Frame and Order, wherein it now ſtands: *(e)* As he, who beholds any curious *Compoſition* of Art, when put together, and in the *Groſs*, can neither admire the Work, nor praiſe the Maker ſo properly, as that Perſon can, who ſees it in its ſeveral *Parts*, and, as it is put together Piece by Piece, is let into the Myſtery of all its *Movements*.

The Reaſons why God created the World.

(f) GOD indeed, who was already *infinite* in all Perfections, and abſolutely *ſelf-ſufficient* to his own Happineſs, could have no other Motive for his giving Exiſtence to any Thing, but his own *good Pleaſure*; but that this good Pleaſure of his is not inconſiſtent with his *Glory*, and the Celebration of his Praiſes by Creatures made capable of contemplating his Works, is a Truth too manifeſt to be diſputed. For, when we find the Scriptures calling upon inanimate Beings, *to praiſe the Name of the Lord, i. e.* by the Mouth of Men and Angels, who are able to diſcern the *inviſible Things of him, even his eternal Power and Godhead*, by the Things, that are ſeen in their Make and Compoſition: When, in the *Old* Teſtament, all the People upon the Earth are requir'd *to* (g) *praiſe the Lord with a Song, and to ſing Praiſes luſtily unto him with a good Courage, becauſe that by his Word were the Heavens made, and all the Hoſt of them by the Breath of his Mouth*; when, in the *New*, all the Inhabitants of Heaven are repreſented as celebrating God upon the ſame Account, and inceſſantly crying, *(h) Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive Glory, and Honour, and Power, for thou haſt created all Things, and for thy Pleaſure they are, and were created*; how can it be thought a *ſelfiſh* and abſurd Thing * (as ſome call it) for God, upon that Score, to exact the Tribute of our Praiſe, or to be pleas'd with the Incenſe of ſuch Oblations? Nay, what elſe indeed is there, that we can imagine, the ever-bleſſed Deity takes Delight and Complacency in for ever, but in his own infinite Excellencies and Perfections, in the Manifeſtation of them in the Works of Creation and Providence, and in the grateful Return of Praiſe and Thankſgiving, both in Heaven and Earth, for ſuch Wonders of his immenſe Power and Goodneſs: And therefore (*i*) *praiſe the Lord, all ye his Works; praiſe him ye Angels and all his Hoſt; praiſe him Sun and Moon; praiſe him, ye Stars of Light; praiſe him, all ye Heavens, and ye Waters that are above the Heavens: Let them praiſe the Name of the Lord, for he ſpake the Word, and they were made; he commanded, and they were created.*

(*a*) Heb. i. 2. (*b*) Eph. iii. 9. (*c*) Col. i. 16. (*d*) Job xxxviii. 7. (*e*) *Jenkins's* Reaſonableneſs, Vol. II. (*f*) *Clarke's* Ser. Vol. VII. (*g*) Pſal. xxxiii. 3, 6. (*h*) Rev. iv, 11.

* To aſſert this, *That God created the World for his own Glory*, in *Des Cartes's* Opinion, is a very childiſh Thing, and reſembles him to a proud Man. It is more worthy the Deity, *ſays he*, to attribute the Creation of the World to the *Exundation*, and overflowing of his tranſcendent and infinite Goodneſs, which is, in its own Nature, and in the very Notion of it, moſt free, diffuſive, and communicative. *Ray* on the Creation.

(*i*) Pſal. cxlviii. 1, &c.

The

The OBJECTION.

" BUT there will be little Occaſion " for all theſe Praiſes, and *Magni-* " *ficats*, if we take the Work out of God's " Hands, and ſuppoſe that the World is " *eternal*; that, for an infinite Succeſſion " of Ages, all Things have been in the " ſame Order and Poſition, wherein we " now behold them; or that from the " *Goodneſs* of God, which is *eſſential* to " his Nature, they have all along flow'd, " by way of *Emanation*, even as the *Rays* " do from the Sun: That if the World " had any Beginning, ſome *inferior* A- " gents, ſuch as *Neceſſity*, *Chance*, *plaſ-* " *tick Nature*, or the potent Arm of ſome " ſuperior Angel was employ'd in the " Formation of it; or that, (if we muſt " needs call in the Supreme Being) (*a*) " there was no occaſion for him to do any " Thing more, than merely to create *Mat-* " *ter*, to divide it into *Parts*, and put it in " *motion*, and ſo leave Matter and Motion " to do the reſt, in a ſettled *Courſe*, and " by a few eſtabliſh'd *Laws*, without any " farther Interpoſition. This ſeems more " agreeable to the *Majeſty* of the *moſt High*, " and will better account for the *Defects* " and Irregularities of the Work, now it is " finiſh'd. For, as *(b) God is Light, and* " *in him is no Darkneſs at all*, we cannot " imagine, how any Thing faulty or im- " perfect ſhould proceed from his infinite " Wiſdom and Power; and yet, without " the Suppoſition of a *finite* and *fallible* " Agent employ'd in the Affair, what " ſhall we ſay for the two *Zones*, the *Torrid*, " and the *Frigid*, which are utterly *uſeleſs*, " and not to be inhabited; for the *Super-* " *abundance* of Seas and Water, in *ſome* " Parts of the Globe; and in *others*, the " many parch'd, and barren *Deſarts* for " want of it; *(c)* for thoſe vaſt and *ill-fa-* " *vour'd Mountains*, which ſerve for no " Purpoſe, unleſs it be to *diſfigure* the Face " of Nature; and for thoſe terrible *Vul-* " *cano's*, and horrid *Irruptions*, which " ſhake the *Pillars*, and tear the very " *Entrails* of the Earth to pieces? What " ſhall we ſay to the Growth of *poiſonous* " Herbs, the Procreation of *noxious* Ani- " mals, the Generation of *Monſters*, and " the *woeful* Condition of *him*, the re- " puted *Lord* of all, who is born in a " more *helpleſs* State, and under the Con- " tingency of greater *Calamities*, than any " of his Fellow Creatures; and yet, when " he hath arriv'd to *Maturity*, and juſt " begins to know what it is to be a " Man, he declines, he droops, he ſickens, " he dies away, and (*d*) *is as Water, ſpilt* " *upon the Ground, which cannot be gather'd* " *up again?*"

Anſwer'd, by ſhewing the Abſurdity *of the World's being* eternal.

THAT Something muſt *neceſſarily* have been *eternal*, is evident to any one, who conſiders, that, as nothing can poſſibly give Exiſtence to itſelf, never any thing muſt have exiſted, had there not, from all Eternity, been a *prior* Cauſe to give it Being. Now, whatever this *eternal* Cauſe was, it muſt of Neceſſity be *ſelf-exiſtent*, *independent*, and abſolutely *perfect*; but that theſe Properties can ever belong to *dull ſtupid Matter*, the loweſt and meaneſt of any Thing we know in the whole Rank of Beings, is hardly to be imagin'd. Suppoſe however, that *Matter* were *ſelf-exiſtent*, yet, as it cannot have its Exiſtence in itſelf, without having it in all its *Parts*, even to the moſt minute *Atom*, we muſt be oblig'd to acknowledge, that there are as many *ſelf-exiſtent*, and eternal Beings, and, in Conſequence, as many *Gods*, as there are, not only viſible Parts, but even *Grains* of Duſt and Atoms in the World.

THE ſacred Writers have repreſented it as a very ridiculous Thing, *(e) to ſay to a Stock, thou art my Father, or to a Stone, thou haſt begotten me*; *(f) to fall down to a Stump of a Tree; to worſhip it, to pray to it, and ſay, deliver me, for thou art my God:* But, upon the Suppoſition, that Matter is *eternal*, and *ſelf-exiſtent*, i. e. the very ſame with the Supreme Being, there is no Folly in making a God of *Stocks or Stones*, or in worſhipping the vileſt Things in Nature. Upon this Suppoſition, *(g)* God muſt undergo all the *Forms* and *Changes* of Matter; be turn'd into this Thing, or that Thing; have this or that Quality; be hot or cold, moiſt or dry, high or low; be a Man, a Horſe, a Fiſh, a Fowl, or any Thing. Upon this Suppoſition he muſt

(*a*) *Jenkins*'s Reaſon. Vol. II. (*b*) 1 John i. 5. (*c*) *Burnet*'s Theory. (*d*) 2 Sam. xiv. 14.
(*e*) Jer. ii. 27. (*f*) Iſ. xliv. 17. (*g*) *Nicholls*'s Conference, Vol. I.

must be liable to the *Weakneſſes* and Misfortunes of all Kinds of Creatures; he muſt be ſick, and lame, angry, and thirſty, and hungry, when any poor Men or Beaſts are under theſe Circumſtances. Nay, upon this Suppoſition, he muſt not only be *aſſiſtant*, but himſelf actually *commit* all the *Wickedneſs*, that is done under the Sun: For, if God be *Matter*, and, conſequently, *every Thing*, he then muſt do every Thing; not only thoſe *virtuous* Actions, which are the Subject of *Commendation*, but thoſe vile and *infamous* ones too, which are only known in *Goals* and *Stews*. But this is impious to ſay, and ſhocking to think on.

And of an infinite Succeſſion.

IT is a known Suggeſtion of the *Scoffers* of old, that, (*a*) *ſince the Fathers fell aſleep, all Things continue, as they were from the Creation*; and ſo may ſome now imagine, that, becauſe they ſee the World go on in a *regular* Courſe, Age following Age, and one Generation ſucceeding another, that therefore it has always been ſo *from Everlaſting*; never conſidering, that an *infinite Succeſſion* is a Thing utterly *impoſſible*. For if, before the preſent State of Things, there was an infinite *Viciſſitude*, nothing can ſucceed *after*, becauſe Nothing can be ſuppoſed *more* than infinite. "If therefore the "World was from *Eternity*, (as one (*b*) "expreſſes it) we muſt ſay, that the "*Courſe* of Generations had no Begin-"ning, and, conſequently, that infinite Suc-"ceſſions are *paſt* already, and if paſt, "then are at an End: But to ſay that "an infinite Number of any Thing "has an End, and, conſequently, is not "infinite, or is both finite and infinite "at the ſame Time, is flat Nonſenſe, "and the moſt palpable Contradiction, "that can be imagined". (*c*) Now, if it be impoſſible, that any *ſucceſſive* Duration ſhould be actually *infinite*, or have infinite Succeſſions already paſt and gone, it muſt neceſſarily follow, that all the Things, which we now behold in the World, and which paſs before us in conſtant and regular Revolutions, are not *eternal*, but had a certain *Period*, when they, and their Motions both began.

at the World nor emanate *along from d.*

FOR, if we conſider the World, as it now appears to be a vaſt *Machine*, compounded of many different Ingredients, we cannot but imagine, that there was a particular Time, when theſe ſeveral Ingredients were put together. (*d*) To conceive an *eternal Watch*, whoſe *Pieces* were never ſeparate, nor in any other Form, than a Watch, or an *eternal Houſe*, whoſe *Materials* were never aſunder, but always in the Shape of an Houſe, is almoſt impoſſible; but how much more difficult is it, to conceive an *eternal World*, which is made up of many more Ingredients, and more various *Subſtances*, than any human Compoſition whatever. 'Tis greatly to the Praiſe of the *ſacred Hiſtorian* therefore, that he has adapted his *Account* of the Creation to our natural Conceptions of it, and ſhewn us the World in its firſt and ſimple *Dreſs*, before it roſe to the ſtately Fabrick it now is. Had it proceeded from God indeed, by Way of neceſſary *Emanation*, it muſt have appeared in its full Perfection at firſt; but then we can hardly refrain from thinking, that it muſt have been of the ſame *Subſtance* with God himſelf: Whereas, though all Things were made by God, yet are they no Part of his *Subſtance*, as the *Rays* are certainly a Part of the *Sun*.

THE *Compariſon* therefore is not juſt; nor can the *Goodneſs* of God be any Reſtraint upon his Will. As Goodneſs denotes a *moral* Perfection in him, he is *abſolutely* and *neceſſarily* good, becauſe it is impoſſible for him to do evil; but, as it ſignifies *Favour* and *Beneficence* towards others, he is not *neceſſarily* ſo. (*e*) The Exertments of his Bounty are *arbitary*, and the Communication of his Graces depends upon his *ſovereign* Will. His Will and Pleaſure therefore were the true Reaſon of the World's *Production*, and of the determinate *Time* of its Beginning. Had God not made the World at all, we could not have thought him *unjuſt*. As he was always perfect, he could ſtand in *need* of Nothing: Nor can we ſuppoſe any *Motive* able to inforce him to do what was not his own *Choice*; becauſe it is impoſſible that the *Freedom* of an infinite Will (to which no Power is ſuperior) ſhould ever be guided by *Neceſſity*.

But is of late *Production.*

IN making the World therefore, the Freedom of God's Will did limit the

U Time

(*a*) 2 Pet. iii. 4. (*b*) Biſhop *Ward*. (*c*) *Bentley*'s Sermon at *Boyle*'s Lectures. (*d*) *Burnet*'s Theory. (*e*) *Edwards*'s Theol. Refor. Vol. I.

Time of its Creation; and, that the Time of its Creation did not exceed the common *Computation*, the * gradual *Increaſe* of Mankind upon the Face of the Earth, the late *Diſcovery* of one whole *Quarter* of the Globe, the new *Plantation* of particular Countries and Iſlands, the known Original of moſt Empires and Kingdoms, the firſt *Inſtitution* of *Pagan* Worſhip, the † recent *Date* of Hiſtory and Records, and the ‡ modern *Invention* of many uſeful Arts and Sciences, which, (if the World had been eternal, and infinite Ages of Mankind preceded) muſt have been found out, and improv'd to the utmoſt, many *Myriads* of Ages ago, are a ſufficient Demonſtration.

The Errors of Philoſophers.

ST. *PAUL*, ſpeaking of ſome among the *Heathen*, who were reputed *perhaps no mean* Philoſophers in their Ages, gives us this Character of them; that, (*a*) *profeſſing themſelves to be wiſe, they became Fools, being vain in their Imaginations*, and, (*b*) *having their Underſtanding darkened*; and (*c*) *becauſe they did not like to retain God in their Knowledge*, (*d*) *God ſent upon them ſtrong Deluſion, that they ſhould believe a Lye.* Some of theſe Philoſophers fancied (*e*) that the World was eternal by *Neceſſity* of Nature, and were ſo *abſurd*, as to imagine, that it was a ſatisfactory Account of the *Cauſe* of the Exiſtence of an infinite Variety of Things, to affirm, that they exiſted *without any Cauſe at all.* Others aſcribed the Formation of this ſtately Fabrick of the World to blind *Chance*, and were ſo *fooliſh*, as to contend, that, what could not account for the Beauty and Contrivance of any *ſingle Part*, might be a ſufficient Cauſe of the Production of the *Whole:* And (*f*) others imputed it to one common *plaſtick* Nature, which, tho' *ſenſeleſs*, and unintelligent itſelf, might be *conſtant*, and *regular* in its Operations, and, without the *Direction* of a ſuperior Being, work out all this glorious *Syſtem* of Things by its own native *Power* and *Energy*. But now, what a groſs Infatuation is this, that Men ſhould attempt to *depoſe* from the Work of making the World an *All-wiſe* and *Almighty* God, and, in his Stead, ſubſtitute mere *Names*, idle *Notions*, and empty *Sounds*, that have no Signification at all, and, by the firſt Inventors of them could be deſign'd for no other Purpoſe, than to conceal their own Ignorance, and impoſe upon the Vulgar. For *Neceſſity* (if it were *a real* Being) muſt be ſuppoſed to act always in the

And their Miſapplication of Terms.

* This is manifeſt from the Hiſtory of the *Jewiſh* Nation, from the Account of the *Roman Cenſus*, and *Regiſters* of our own Country, where the Proportion of Births and Burials is found, upon Obſervation, to be yearly, as *fifty* to *forty:* But now, if Mankind do increaſe, though never ſo ſlowly, (but one Couple ſuppoſe in an Age) it is enough to evince the Falſhood of *infinite Generations* already expir'd. *Bentley*'s Ser. at *Boyle*'s Lect.

† *Varro*, the learned *Roman* Writer, we mention'd before, tells us, that the *firſt* Age of the World was *dark*, the *ſecond fabulous*, and that the *third* only deſerved the Name of *hiſtorical. Plutarch* complains, that beyond the Times of *Theſeus*, and *Hercules*, nothing of Certainty is diſcovered in Hiſtory, nothing but *Vanities*, and *Fables*. *Macrobius* declares his Opinion, that the World cannot be very *old*, becauſe all the Knowledge we have of what has been done in it doth not exceed two *thouſand Years*, meaning from the Time wherein he lived; and therefore we find *Lucretius* (as our Tranſlator has rendered him) confeſſing, that the *Theban* and *Trojan* Wars were the *ultimate* Limits of Knowledge which Men have of the moſt ancient Affairs of the World.

> But grant the World eternal, grant it knew
> No Infancy, and grant it never new;
> Why then no Wars our Poets Songs employ,
> Before the Siege of *Thebes*, or that of *Troy?*
> Why former Heroes fell without a Name?
> Why not their Battles told by laſting Fame? CREECH Lib. V.

‡ This, in ſome meaſure, is diſcover'd by *Clemens of Alexandria*, in his *Stromata*; by *Joſephus*, in his *Antiquities*, and by *Strabo*, *Pliny*, and other Ancients, who endeavour to aſſign the firſt Invention of Arts, and to trace them to their Original. But now, if the World was from Eternity, how theſe Things could be of ſo late a Date, *Lucretius* himſelf could not imagine, and therefore he was compell'd to acknowledge, according to our *Tranſlation*,

> That therefore Arts, which lay but rude before,
> Are poliſh'd now; we now increaſe the Store,
> We perfect all the old, and find out more.
> Shipping's improv'd; we add new Oars and Wings;
> And Muſick now is found, and ſpeaking Strings.
> This Truth, this Riſe of Things we lately know. CREECH Lib. V.

(*a*) Rom. i. 21, 22, (*b*) Eph. iv. 18. (*c*) Rom. i. 18. (*d*) 2 Theſſ. ii. 11. (*e*) *Clarke*'s Ser. Vol. VII. (*f*) *Handcock*'s Ser. at *Boyle*'s Lect.

the ſame Manner, without any *Change* or Variety, either in Kind or Degree. *Chance* (if it were ſomething too) could not refrain from doing all Things in an *Hurry*, confuſedly, inadviſedly, and at all Adventures; and *Nature* (if it be not God) is but another Name for *Matter*, that dull, lumpiſh Thing, which, without ſome *external Aid*, cannot ſo much as *move* one Particle of itſelf. And are theſe proper Agents to frame a *Machine*, wherein ſuch an inconceivable *Activity*, ſuch an infinite *Variety* of Things, and ſuch an exact *Uniformity* in all its Parts, to every common Beholder is conſpicuous. The Truth is, *Neceſſity*, *Fate*, *Chance*, *Fortune*, *Nature*, &c. are *Terms* we make uſe of in common Converſation, and there they have ſome little *Import*; but, to apply them to the Formation of Things, or the Solution of *Phænomena's*, is the Height of *Abſurdity*, and can mean nothing but downright Ignorance.

Angels not able to make the World.

ANGELS indeed are all *active* and *intelligent* Beings; and ſome may be ſuppos'd to ſurpaſs others in Knowledge and Power to a vaſt Degree of Eminence: But, as they are no more than *finite* Creatures, they were none of them able to rear this ſpacious Fabrick, (*a*) to *lay the Foundations of the Earth*, (*b*) *and to ſtretch out the Heavens as a Curtain.* This was a Work, that God had reſerv'd to himſelf, to make his *Name glorious* both in Heaven and Earth, and to diſtinguiſh his *ſovereign* Power from all others, that ſhould, at any Time, pretend to *rival* him, for ſo the Prophet repreſents the Matter: (*c*) *The Lord is the true God, he is the living God, and everlaſting King. At his Wrath the Earth ſhall tremble, and the Nations ſhall not be able to abide his Indignation. Thus ſhall ye ſay unto them: The Gods, that have not made the Heavens and the Earth, even they ſhall periſh from the Earth, and from under the Heavens; but he hath made the Earth by his Power, he hath eſtabliſh'd the World by his Wiſdom, and hath ſtretched out the Heavens by his Diſcretion.*

Much leſs Matter *and* Motion.

THAT God ſhould do all this with his own Hands, ſome have imagin'd not ſo becoming his *Greatneſs* and *Majeſty*; and therefore they ſuppoſe, that, at the Creation, he gave certain *Laws* to *Matter* and *Motion*, in the Strength of which they accompliſh'd the Work, without any farther Trouble. But, beſides that it is not agreed (nor perhaps ever will) what theſe *Laws of Motion* are, which Philoſophers talk ſo much of, "I look upon a Law (*d*) (ſays "the illuſtrious Mr. *Boyle*) as a *moral*, not "*phyſical* Cauſe, according to which an "*intelligent* and *free* Agent is bound to "regulate its Actions; but *inanimate* Bo-"dies are utterly uncapable of under-"ſtanding what it is, or what it enjoins, "or when they act conformably, or un-"conformably to it: The Actions there-"fore of *inanimate* Bodies, which cannot "incite, or moderate their own *Motions*, "are produc'd by real *Power*, and not "by *Laws*."

BUT admitted there were any *real* Laws of Motion, (*e*) an *intelligent* Being would, nevertheleſs, be requiſite to put them in Execution: For, ſince Motion is a *fluent* Thing, and one Part of its Duration is abſolutely *independent* on the other; it does not follow, that, becauſe any Thing *moves this* Moment, it muſt continue to do ſo the *next*: No, it ſtands in as much Need of an *efficient Cauſe*, to *preſerve* and continue its Motion, as it did at firſt to produce it: And therefore though God had given *Laws* to Matter at *firſt*, yet, without his continual Direction and Super-intendency, the *Wheels* would have ſoon ſtood ſtill, and the Work become abortive. For ſuppoſe Matter divided into the ſubtilleſt *Parts*, and mov'd with the greateſt *Velocity* imaginable, yet ſtill it is but a ſtupid Being: It makes no nearer Approach to Senſe, Perception, or vital Energy, than it did before; and 'tis but *ſtopping* the *internal* Motion of its Parts, and reducing them to reſt, (as without ſome *external* Impulſe they will of their own Accord) and immediately it becomes as groſs, as heavy, and as *lumpiſh*, as it was before.

WHATEVER Effects, therefore, we may think proper to aſcribe to Matter and Motion in their preſent Conſtitution, we have Reaſon to preſume, that, before any of their Laws took place, the ſeveral Parts of the Univerſe were *rais'd* and adjuſted, in the Manner, wherein we ſee them; otherwiſe, it can hardly be thought, but (*f*) that, in a *Chaos* of Matter, confuſedly rolling, and knocking one Part of it againſt another, ſo many

(*a*) Job xxxviii. 4. (*b*) Iſa. xl. 22. (*c*) Jer. x. 10, &c. (*d*) The Chriſtian Virtuoſo. (*e*) Ray on the Creation. (*f*) *Jenkin*'s Reaſonableneſs, Vol. II.

many Accidents muſt intervene, as would make it impoſſible ever to ſettle into any *regular* Form; at leaſt, had Matter been left to its own Working, and Jumbling, according to any *mechanical* Laws of Motion, the World, very probably, might not have been made to this very Moment. In a word, as making the World muſt undoubtedly be the Work of God, he only can declare in what *Manner* he made it; and therefore (inſtead of acquieſcing in the *Revelation*, that he hath been pleas'd to give us of it) to aſſign other *Agents* in this wonderful Operation, and to pretend to determine by what *Steps* and Degrees they all along proceeded, is an Attempt ſo vain, ſo fooliſhly arrogant, as might well deſerve this *ſarcaſtical* Enquiry; (*a*) *Where waſt thou, when I laid the Foundations of the Earth? Declare, if thou haſt Underſtanding. Who hath laid the Meaſures thereof, if thou knoweſt? And who hath ſtretched the Line upon it? Whereupon are the Foundations thereof faſten'd? or who laid the Corner Stone thereof, when the Morning Stars ſung together, and the Sons of God ſhouted for Joy?*

Suppos'd Defects in the Creation, whence.

AFTER God had *finiſh'd* all his Work, upon a Review and Examination of it, he pronounced it *good*, *i. e.* fitted and adapted to the Uſes for which he made it; and therefore, whatever *Defects* we may pretend to eſpy in it, they cannot proceed from him, who could know all Things by one *omniſcient* Thought, could do all Things by one *omnipotent* Act, and whoſe infinite *Goodneſs* induc'd him always to do, what his Wiſdom *knew* to be beſt; and muſt therefore, be charg'd upon human *Ignorance*.

The Torrid and Frigid Zones habitable and commodious.

(*b*) FOR many Ages, the ancient *Philoſophers*, (from the *Vicinity* of the Sun, and the *Directneſs* of its Rays) unanimouſly taught, that the *Torrid Zone* was not habitable, never ſuſpecting, that the Body of the Earth had ſo great an Efficacy in the *Change* of the Air, as to make thoſe Parts, that are *near*, or under the *Line*, as fruitful, and pleaſant, and as fit to make a *Paradiſe*, as any in the World. For, (*c*) beſides that the Sun, (tho' it be *perpendicular*) lies but *twelve Hours* upon the Inhabitants, and then leaves the Night (which is of the ſame Length) to cool and refreſh them; they have frequent *Showers*, and conſtant *Breezes*, or freſh Gales of Winds from the *Eaſt*, which mightily contribute to the *Temperature* of their Climate; and, from the * Teſtimony of Travellers we learn, that the *Equality* of the Weather *prolongs* their Lives to a greater Degree, than ſuch as dwell nearer the *Poles*, where frequent Viciſſitudes of Heat and Cold waſte their *Stamina*, and prey upon their Conſtitutions. *Nearer the Poles* however, the Parts, that have been diſcovered, are found to have their Uſes. In the *Waters* live Fiſhes (Whales particularly in *Greenland*) and Fowls of various Kinds, that are not commonly met with in other Regions; and on the *Land*, Bears, and Foxes, and Deer, and other Animals, whoſe *Fleſh* is convenient for Food, and whoſe *Skins* are very valuable, (in Conjunction with that Plenty of *Fuel*, which cold Countries always afford) to keep the Inhabitants warm.

The Uſefulneſs of large Seas.

(*d*) THAT the Waters ſhould be *gather'd together*, and the *dry Land* appear, we have Reaſon to think a Work of *Omnipotence*, and an Inſtance of infinite Wiſdom, and Goodneſs, tho' we wanted a Revelation to confirm it. For, beſides the aweful *Apprehenſion*, that this vaſt *Collection* of Waters gives us of God's tremendous *Majeſty*, the Benefits that accrue from thence, in Point of Commerce and Traffick, are ineſtimable. As God never intended that any Part of the Globe ſhould live *independent* of the reſt, but that a kind *Communion* ſhould interfere between Nation and Nation, he, here and there, interſperſed large *Oceans*, that thoſe, who love to *occupy their Buſineſs* in the watry *Element*, might find an Employ ſuited to their *Genius*, and have an Opportunity both (*f*) *of ſeeing the Wonders of the Lord in the Deep*, and of holding a Correſpendence

(*a*) Job xxxviii. 3, *&c.* (*b*) *Bentley*'s Ser. at *Boyle*'s Lect. (*c*) *Ray* on the Creation.

* Monſieur *Rochefort*, in his Hiſtory of the *Antilles Iſlands*, tells us, that the ordinary Term of Life among the *Caribbeans* is an *hundred and fifty* Years long, and ſometimes more. The *Hollanders*, who traffick in the *Molucca Iſlands*, aſſure us, that the Natives generally live to an *hundred and thirty* Years. *Vincent le Blant* reports, that in *Sumatra*, *Java*, and in the neighbouring Iſlands, they live to an *hundred and forty*, and, in the Realm of *Coſſuby*, to an *hundred and fifty Years*: But *Francis Pirara* extends the Life of the *Braſilians* to an *hundred and ſixty*, and ſays, that in *Florida* and *Jacatan*, there are Men found, who ſurpaſs that Age. *Ray* on the *Creation*.

(*d*) *Ray* on the Creation. (*e*) Pſal cvii. 24.

dence with their Fellow Creatures all the World over; of conveying to them, by a quick and eaſy Carriage, the *Produce* of their own Country; and of returning home laden with the *Wealth*, and valuable Commodities of others. But, beſides this, as Water, we know, is the great *Support* and Nouriſhment of every Thing growing upon the Face of the Earth, the *Sea* is made its grand *Receptacle*, that, from ſo large a *Baſon*, the Sun, by its Heat, may raiſe * ſuch a Quantity of *Vapours*, as may form themſelves into *thick Clouds*; which, being carried *upon the Wings of the Wind*, may either diſperſe, and fall down in *Rain*, to mollify the Ground, and make it fruitful; or, being condens'd by the *Cold* on the Top of high Mountains, may be turn'd into *Fountains*, which, gathering as they run, become ſpacious *Rivers*, enriching the *Valleys* below, adorning the Cities they paſs by, and ſupplying *Proviſion* for the Uſe of Man.

Deſarts and Waſtes accounted for.

If therefore the *Extent* and Compaſs of the Sea had been *leſs*, the *Waſtes* and *Deſarts*, we complain of, had certainly been *greater*, becauſe there had been leſs Rain, and fewer Rivers to moiſten them. (*a*) It is an Obſervation however among *Naturaliſts*, that, in moſt Parts of the World, the Sea *ſubſides*, and the dry Land *increaſes*; nor are they wanting to remark, that, in Places uninhabited, or diſpeopled, there is a great *Inclination* in the Earth to become *barren* and ſtony; even as they tell us of *Paleſtine*, which formerly was a Place *luxuriantly* fruitful, but now, by the Ravage of the *Romans*, and *Turks*, the Inhabitants are ſo diminiſh'd, that it is become as deſolate, as a Wilderneſs, for want of Cultivation: I ſay *for want of Cultivation*; for, as it is not to be doubted, but that, by the Labour and Induſtry of its Inhabitants, any Country may be greatly improv'd; ſo where Men have not only neglected ſuch Improvement, but made *Eaſe* and *Indolence*, or *Riot* and *Luxury* the profeſs'd Buſineſs of their Lives, 'tis no great Wonder, if thoſe Places, which Nature had made rich and plenteous, ſhould, in a ſmall Compaſs of Years, become miſerably poor and deſtitute, eſpecially if we take the Providence of God along with us, (*b*) *who turneth the Floods into a Wilderneſs; who drieth up the Water-ſprings; and a fruitful Land maketh he barren, for the Wickedneſs of them that dwell therein.*

The Uſefulneſs of high Mountains.

It is agreed on all Hands, that the higheſt Mountains bear but a ſmall *Proportion* to the Earth's *Diameter*, by which we ought to compute them; but, if the *Inequality* were greater, it is ſufficiently compenſated by the delightful *Proſpects*, which their Eminence gives us, and the many ſubſtantial *Benefits*, which every Part of them derive unto us. For (*c*) the *Ridges* of theſe Mountains, which are plac'd by Providence in the midſt of their *Continents*, are like ſo many *Alembicks*, to diſtil freſh Water for the Uſe of Man and Beaſt, and, by their *Declivity*, to give a Deſcent to the *Streams*, which convey a Fertility into the Valleys. Their *Sides* are of Uſe for the Production of *Trees*, and *Plants*, and a great Variety of ſuch *medicinal* Herbs, and Roots, as are reckon'd *Natives* in theſe Parts, but will not ſo kindly grow in an uniform *Level*. Their *Bowels* are deſign'd for the Generation, and convenient digging of *Metals*, and *Minerals*, which, in a *flat* Country (were they to grow there) could not be come at for want of proper *Addits*, and Drains for the Water. Their *Skirts*, ſpreading, like *Skreens*, to keep off the Cold and nipping Blaſts of the *North* and *Eaſt* Winds, afford convenient Places for *Habitation*, and comfortable *Situations* for Houſes, and Villages. Nay their very *Tops* ſerve for (*d*) *the Refuge*, and Maintenance of various Animals, Birds, and Beaſts; and the whole *Extent* of them, for *Boundaries* and Defences to the Territories of Kingdoms and Commonwealths: Such a Multitude of Reaſons have we to bleſs God (*e*) *for the chief Things of the ancient Mountains, aad for the precious Things of the laſting Hills!*

The Cauſe, and Uſefulneſs of Vulcano's.

(*f*) Some of theſe Mountains are indeed very *dangerous* and deſtructive. They occaſion terrible

* "For, if there were but half the Sea, that there now is, there would be alſo but half the Quantity of "*Vapours*, and, conſequently, we could have but half ſo many *Rivers*, as now there are, to ſupply all the "dry Land we have; for the *Quantity* of Vapours, which are rais'd, bears a Proportion to the *Surface*, "from whence they ariſe, as well as to the Heat, which raiſes them. The wiſe Creator therefore did ſo "prudently order it, that the Sea ſhould be *large* enough to ſupply Vapours, ſufficient for all the Land, "which it would not do, if it were *leſs*, than now it is. *Keill*'s Examination of *Burnet*'s Theory.

(*a*) *Nicholls*'s Conference, Vol. I. (*b*) Pſal. cvii. 33, 34. (*c*) *Ray* on the Creation. (*d*) Pſal. civ. 18. (*e*) Deut. xxxiii. 15. (*f*) *J. Clarke*'s Ser. at *Boyle*'s Lect.

terrible *Earthquakes*, and frequently fill the neighbouring Country with Fire and Devaſtation: But then we muſt conſider, that, as *Sulphur*, *Nitre*, and other Minerals do not only contribute to the *Fertility* of the Earth, but are abſolutely neceſſary likewiſe to the Life and *Vegetation* of all Plants and Animals, it is proper that there ſhould be ſome common *Store-houſes*, where theſe Materials ſhould be *depoſited*, and thence *convey'd* by the Air over all the *Surface* of the Earth. Now, as the Sea is the common *Receptacle* of the Waters, which, by overflowing its Banks, may ſometimes occaſion great Miſchief; ſo the *Caverns* of theſe Mountains are *Repoſitories* of different Kinds of *Minerals*, which, by mixing together, raiſe a *Fermentation*, that diſſipates their *Subſtance*, and forcing it through the Surface of the Earth, by the Help of the Wind drives it about, from one Place to another, until the whole *Atmoſphere* be *impregnated* with it. But when it ſo happens, that this *Fermentation* is made in ſuch *ſubterraneous* Caverns, as are not *wide* enough for the *nitro-ſulphureous* Matter to expand itſelf, it will then either *ſhake* the Earth to ſome conſiderable Diſtance, or *tear* the Caverns in Pieces, or make its Way out at one *particular* Paſſage, and ſo form a *burning Mountain*.

(*a*) THIS ſeems to be the Original of *Vulcano's*, and this the Method, whereby the *fermented* Seeds of Minerals are diſſipated through the Air to anſwer the wiſe Purpoſes, for which they were intended; and therefore we ought to account it* a peculiar Providence of God, that, in ſeveral Regions of the World, he has appointed theſe ſubterraneous *Magazines*, that thence he might circulate ſuch *Matter*, as, to the End of the World, muſt be needful to the Life and Vegetation of all his Creatures. And though ſome Inconveniences may poſſibly ariſe from them, yet, as theſe are but *Trifles*, in Compariſon of the ineſtimable Benefits they daily produce, they cannot denote the leaſt Imperfection in his Wiſdom or Goodneſs: To complain of them therefore, is, in effect, to find fault with him (as (*b*) one expreſſes it) that he has made us *Men*, and not *Angels*, and placed us upon this *Globe*, and not in a more *celeſtial* Habitation.

Poiſonous Herbs.

THE Royal *Pſalmiſt* ſeems to have pointed out the *proper Proviſion*, that God hath made for the comfortable Subſiſtence both of Man and Beaſt: (*c*) *He cauſeth the Graſs to grow for Cattle, and Herb for the Service of Men, that he may bring forth Food out of the Earth, and Wine, that maketh glad the Heart of Man, Oil, to make him a chearful Countenance, and Bread to ſtrengthen Man's Heart:* From (*c*) whence it ſeems to follow, that, as every Species of Creatures have their proper *Food*, and are endowed with *Senſes* capable of diſtinguiſhing it from all others, the Will of *Providence* is, that they ſhould adhere to that, which he has appointed them, as moſt agreeable to their Natures. All Things are *good* and *wholſome* in themſelves; and, if at any Time they prove *hurtful* and *injurious*, 'tis only from their *Miſapplication*, or *Super-abundance*. Hence it is, that what is *Food*, and preſerves Life in one *Animal*, may be *Poiſon*, and Death in another, becauſe its Stomach may not be able to *digeſt* it; and that the ſame Plant, which, in ſome Reſpects, and under ſome Circumſtances, is ſtiled *poiſonous*, is, in other Reſpects, and under other Circumſtances, very *uſeful* and ſalutary. Thus *Hemlock*, which, of old, was a famous *Poiſon*, and even, to this Day, is look'd upon as dangerous, is not only Food for *Goats*, but, even without any

(*a*) *J. Clarke*'s Ser. at *Boyle*'s Lect.

* Some have remark'd a farther Uſe of theſe *burning* Mountains, *viz.* that they are a kind of *Spiracles*, or Tunnels to the Countries, where they are to vent the Fire and Vapours, that would make diſmal *Havock*, (and often do ſo) by dreadful *Concuſſions* and Convulſions of the Earth: Tho' therefore thoſe Countries, where theſe *Vulcano's* are found, are uſually more or leſs troubled with *Earthquakes*, yet were theſe *Diverticula* wanting, they would be much more annoy'd with them, than they are now; and, in all Probability, to ſuch a Degree, as to render the Earth, for a vaſt Space around them, perfectly *uninhabitable*. In ſhort, ſo beneficial are theſe *Spiracula* to the Territories, where they are found, that there do not want Inſtances of ſome, which have been reſcued, and wholly delivered from *Earthquakes*, by the breaking forth of a new *Vulcano* there, becauſe it continually diſcharged the Matter, which, by being *impriſoned* in the Bowels of the Earth, was the Occaſion of great and frequent Calamities. Nay, if the *Hypotheſis* of *central Fire* and Waters be true, theſe *Outlets* ſeem to be of great Uſe to the Peace and Quiet of the whole *terraqueous Globe*, in venting the *ſubterraneous* Heat and Vapours, which, if pent up, would make dreadful and dangerous Commotions of the Earth and Waters. *Derham*'s Ser. at *Boyle*'s Lect. and *Woodward*'s Eſſay, Part 3.

(*b*) *Bentley*'s Ser. at *Boyle*'s Lect. (*c*) Pſal. civ. 15. (*d*) *J. Clarke*'s Ser. at *Boyle*'s Lect.

any *Correction* or *Preparation*, has * ſometimes effected very conſiderable Cures. The Truth is, infinite, in a manner, are the Plants and Herbs, that grow upon the Face of the Earth; but we can never imagine, that they were all deſign'd for *Food*, or even for Man's Uſe. Some were made for the *Brute* Creation, ſome for *Ornament*, many for *Sight* and *Smell*, and not a few for *Phyſick*, which could be no proper Remedies for ſeveral Diſtempers, incident both to Man and Beaſt, had they not ſome *noxious* Qualities in their Compoſition.

Noxious Animals.

THE like may be ſaid of many *living Creatures*, which, though hurtful to us, are of ſingular Benefit to other Animals, either for Food or Phyſick. *(a)* Thus Birds of all Sorts feed upon venomous Inſects: The *Poultry* Kind greedily devour Spiders, and not only the *Ibis* in *Egypt*, but even our *Stork* and *Peacock* with us, prey upon all Sorts of Serpents. In this Reſpect therefore ſuch Creatures are not utterly *uſeleſs*; but then, conſidering the noble Medicines, which ſome of the moſt venomous and pernicious Kinds afford us, we may well abſolve the divine Wiſdom and Goodneſs in creating what are ſo ſubſervient to our Uſes, and ſo little capacitated to do us Harm. For, beſides that God (*b*) *has impreſs'd a Fear and Dread* of Man upon *every Beaſt of the Field*, and *every Thing*, *that moveth in the* Air, or *on the Earth*, inſomuch that they ſeldom or never make uſe of their *offenſive* Weapons againſt us, unleſs they are firſt aſſaulted and provok'd; God, in his great Mercy, has ſo ordered the Matter, that, whenever they *do*, *ſome* carry their *Cure*, as well as their *Poiſon*, † in their Bodies; and ſo contriv'd is the *Make* of *others*, that they cannot help giving us *Warning* of our Danger, before they do approach us: *(c)* Even as that *Snake*, which is the moſt *poiſonous* of all Serpents, and ſuppoſed to be the *Baſiliſk* of the Antients, gives Notice of his Coming by the *Rattle* in its *Tail*; and the *Shark*, which is the moſt *rapacious* of all Water-Animals, is forc'd to turn himſelf on his Back, (whereby he gives an Opportunity of Eſcape) before he can ſeize upon his Prey: *(d) Lord, what is Man, that thou haſt ſuch Reſpect unto him, or the Son of Man, that thou ſo regardeſt him!*

And Monſters accounted for.

(e) I will give Thanks unto thee, ſays the *Pſalmiſt*, *for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.* Conſidering indeed, the *Variety* and *Multiplicity* of Things, that go to the Compoſition of any Creature, the *Tenderneſs* of its Subſtance, the *Fineneſs* of its Texture, the *Minuteneſs* of its Parts, and the *Liableneſs* of its Form to be hurt by many ſad Accidents, while it continues in the *Womb*, 'tis wonderful, even beyond Imagination, that, in moſt Births there ſhould not be found ſomething, either *deficient* or *redundant*. *(f)* In their *Original*, 'tis true, all Animals are *perfect*, and the Individuals of every Species *folded up* exactly in the ſame Manner: But then, if, in the *Explication* of them, any of the *Parts*, by a *ſuperior* Force be hinder'd from *extending* themſelves to a due Shape, or if they be any way *blended* or confounded with each other, then, in conſequence, there muſt be ſomething either *wanting*, or ſomething *ſuperfluous* in the Whole: But this happens ſo ſeldom, that (except in Caſes of *beſtial* Luſt, or *heterogeneous* Mixtures, which God, in his Juſtice, may ſuffer to take effect for the Confuſion and Puniſhment of the vile *Committers)* the Generality of Mankind

* In the *Philoſophical Tranſactions*, No. 231, we are told, that an Horſe, troubled with the *Farcy*, which could not be cur'd by the moſt conſiderable Remedies, heal'd himſelf of it, in a ſhort Time, by eating *Hemlock*, which he did with great Greedineſs. And Dr. *Mead*, in his Book of Poiſon, tells us of a Woman, "who "being cured of the *Plague*, but wanting *Sleep*, did, with very good Succeſs, eat *Hemlock* for ſome Time, "till, falling ill of a *Fever*, and having left off the Uſe of this Remedy, *Nic. Fontanus*, the *Phyſician* then em- "ploy'd, endeavoured to procure her Reſt by repeated Doſes of *Opium*, which had no Operation, 'till the "Help of *Cicuta* was again called in with deſir'd Succeſs.

(*a*) *Ray* on the Creation. (*b*) Gen. ix. 2.

† The Oil, and (I doubt not) the Body of a *Scorpion* too, is a certain Remedy againſt its Stroke. A *Bee*, a *Whaſp*, or *Hornet*, cruſhed, and rubbed, and bound upon the *Place*, is a certain Cure for the *Sting* of thoſe Creatures, and I queſtion not, but that the Fleſh, eſpecially the Head of *Vipers*, would be found a Remedy for their Bites. "Our *Viper-Catchers* have a Remedy, in which they place ſo great Confidence, as to be no "more afraid of the Bite of a Viper, than of a common *Puncture*, for they immediately cure themſelves by "the Application of their *Specifick*. This, though they keep it a great Secret, I have, upon ſtrict Enquiry, "found to be no other, than *Axunguia Viperina*, or the Fat or Greeſe of Vipers, preſently rubbed into the "Wound; which Remedy Dr. *Mead* tried himſelf, with good Succeſs, on a young Dog, that was bitten in "the Noſe. *Derham*'s Ser. at *Boyle*'s Lect. and *Mead* on Poiſon.

(*c*) *Derham*'s Ser. at *Boyle*'s Lect. (*d*) Pſal. clxiv. 3. (*e*) Pſal. cxxxix. 14. (*f*) *Clarke*'s Ser. at *Boyle*'s Lect.

kind have Reaſon, with the *Pſalmiſt*, to acknowledge their great Creator's Goodneſs: *(a) Thine Eyes did ſee my Subſtance, while it was imperfect, and in thy Book were all my Members written.*

The State and Dignity of Man.

THAT the gracious Author of our Beings ſhould take ſuch Care, and concern himſelf ſo tenderly in the *Formation* of a Creature, which he afterwards *neglects*, and (as diſguſted with his own Workmanſhip) *abandons* to a State of Wretchedneſs and Deſpair, is a Suggeſtion repugnant both to Reaſon and Scripture. The Royal *Pſalmiſt*, ſpeaking to God concerning Man's Condition, has given us a different Repreſentation of it: *(b) Thou haſt made him a little lower than the Angels, and haſt crowned him with Glory and Honour. Thou makeſt him to have Dominion over the Works of thy Hands, and haſt put all Things under his Feet.* As God has inſtituted a manifeſt *Subordination* of Things, and put different Degrees of Perfection, in the ſeveral Ranks of Creatures, one above another, *(c)* we pretend not to the higheſt Dignity, or to be the *Chief* of the whole Creation. We believe an *inviſible* World, and a *Scale* of *ſpiritual* Beings all nobler than us; but we cannot therefore think ourſelves mere walking *Statues of Clay*, or Sons of Brute Earth, whoſe fatal Inheritance is Death and Corruption. We carry the Image of God in us, a rational and immortal Soul, and, in reſpect of our Mind and Reaſon, are related to ſomething *celeſtial*, and far above us. We look for an *Exaltation* of all our *natural* Faculties; we aſpire after an *Eternity* of Happineſs; and we expect a glorious *Inheritance* in the *higheſt Heavens*.

The greateſt Care taken of him all along.

BORN indeed we are in a more helpleſs Condition, than any other Creatures; but then it is to be conſider'd, that God not only concerns himſelf more *immediately* in the Care and Protection of *little Children*, but has likewiſe committed them to the Cuſtody of *tutelar* Angels, and implanted in their Parents ſuch natural *Tenderneſs* and Affection, as will not fail to engage their *mutual* Aſſiſtance in their Behalf; the Father's *Labour* and Aſſiduity, to make a ſufficient Proviſion for their Support and Maintenance, and *(d)* the Mother's *Bowels* of Pity, and *Softneſs* of Temper, to diſcharge the troubleſome and vexatious Office of *bringing them up*; of feeding and dreſſing them, of attending their Steps, and relieving their Wants, not only with *Patience* and Contentment, but even with *Chearfulneſs* and Delectation. Nor muſt it be forgotten, that the poor Infant's helpleſs Eſtate, his *tender* Moans, *innocent* Looks, *winning* Smiles, and *endearing* Actions, contribute not a little to melt the Heart, and attract the Love of his Parents, while he is *young*; and, as he advances in Years, his *Reſemblance* in Perſon, his *Similitude* in Manners, his *obſequious* Carriage, *modeſt* Behaviour, and other *promiſing* Signs of Succeſs in Life excite their Induſtry, and give Wings and Activity to their Study and Endeavours to have him well plac'd in the World. For very wiſe and good Reaſons therefore has God been pleas'd to form this powerful *Bent* of natural Affection in the Breaſt of both *Sexes*, as ſoon as they become Parents; ſince by it we are *nouriſh'd* in our Infancy, *protected* in our Childhood, *inſtructed* in our Youth, and *brought* upon the Stage of Life with more *Advantage* and Solemnity, than if we had been born with a better Sufficience of *Self-ſubſiſtence*.

Reaſons for the Calamities that befall him.

UPON the Stage of Life indeed we meet with many Misfortunes, *and (e) ſore is the Travel, which God hath given to the Sons of Men to be exerciſed therewith:* But then a wiſe Man conſiders, that theſe Misfortunes are the *Taxes*, as it were, and certain Incumbrances upon Life, which no human Creature can be totally exempted from; that the Son of God himſelf, when he aſſum'd our Nature, and *tabernacled* in our Fleſh, was *(f) a Man of Sorrows, and acquainted with Grief*; that the *Patriarchs*, and *Prophets*, in the *Jewiſh*, and the *Apoſtles*, and *Martyrs*, in the *Chriſtian* Church, were great Examples of *paſſive* Virtue, and, both by their Words and Actions, left us this Admonition (*g*) *that we muſt through many Tribulations enter into the Kingdom of God.* He conſiders, that moſt of the Afflictions, which Men endure, are the Reſult of their Abuſe of God's Mercies; either of their *Wantonneſs* in Health, their *Slothfulneſs* in Eaſe, or *Luxury* and Profuſeneſs in Plenty; and therefore he thinks it unreaſonable for (*h*) *living Man to complain, a Man for the Puniſhment of his Sins:* And as for thoſe *few*, which may be ſuppos'd to precede from the

(*a*) Pſal. cxxxix. 15. (*b*) Pſal. viii. 5. 6. (*c*) *Bentley's* Ser. at *Boyle's* Lect. (*d*) *Smalridge's* Ser. (*e*) Eccl. i. 13. (*f*) Iſa. liii. (*g*) Act xiv. 22. (*h*) Sam. iii. 39.

the Hand of God, these he looks upon as the *kind Severities* of an indulgent Father, to wean his Children from the Allurements of earthly Vanities, and, by *gentle* Corrections, to make them descend into *(a)* themselves, and feel what they *are*, poor, and *helpless Creatures*, reflect on what they *have* been, bold, and *inconsiderate Sinners*, and look forward to what they shall be, either exquisitely happy, or miserable to all Eternity. He considers, with the *Royal Preacher*, *(b)* that God has *set the Day of Prosperity over-against that of Adversity, to the End that Man should find nothing after him*; i. e. no Reason to complain of him; that, though in his Passage through Life, he must expect to meet sometimes with lowering *Skies*, rough *Winds*, and very tempestuous *Weather*, yet, in the main, *smooth* Seas, gentle Gales, and *halcion* Days have by much the greater Proportion; and that, upon a just Estimate of Things, (*c*) he can have no Ground to arraign the Conduct of *Providence*, but shall find, that he has had more *Prosperity*, than he deserved, and as much, as was *beneficial* to him; and no more *Adversity*, than was necessary to correct his *Faults*, moderate his *Affections*, and exercise his *Virtues*.

And for the shortness of his Life.

WITH these Considerations, he goes on willingly in his *Road* to the other World, never repining at God, that he has not extended to a greater Length the *Period* of his Life, which he accounts long enough for a State of *Trial*, for a *Race*, for a *Warfare*, for a *Pilgrimage*; but thankfully acknowledging his Goodness, for contracting the Days of his *Travel*, and for receiving him more *maturely* into those eternal *Habitations*, which he hath *prepared for the* Righteous.

The Benefits of old Age.

WITH these Considerations, he proceeds in his *Journey* chearfully, till he comes within the *Verge* of *old Age*, without ever perceiving it: For it is no small Comfort in human Life, that the *Declensions* of it are commonly very *gradual*, and *that we walk down the Hill* (as (*d*) one expresses it) *so very gently, that the Change of the Situation is scarcely perceived, until we are near the Bottom.* If he perceives, however, *Infirmities* coming on, and his Vigour wearing off, his Strength decay'd, and his Blood and Spirits impair'd in their *Vivacity*, this gives him no Uneasiness, because he knows it is the *original* Constitution of his Nature; and therefore he comforts himself with such Reflections as these, — "That *(e) an hoary* "*Head is a Crown of Glory, if it be found* "*in the Way of Righteousness*; that *(f)* "Length of Days takes away what is *vicious* "*in Youth*, and supplies the Mind with "more *substantial* Delights; (*g*) that the "*Coolness* of his Blood has laid his *Pas-* "*sions* asleep, and his *Strength* and *De-* "*sire* are fallen off together; that his long "Experience has taught him the Folly and "Vanity of the World, and the great Ex- "pediency of *retiring* from it; that, (*h*) "having the Noise of Business now over, "and the Pride of Life, and Allurements "of Sense extinguish'd, he has a fit *Op-* "*portunity* of devoting himself wholly to "the great Concern of *Religion*; that the "Power of this, and the Sense of a good "Conscience will support his Courage, chear "his Heart, and smooth his Passage to the "other World; and that the *quicker* Ap- "proaches he makes to his latter End, "the *nearer* he comes to his destin'd Hap- "piness.

And the Comforts of Death.

THESE are the *Consolations*, which a wise Man raises to himself in the *Decline* of Life; and, when he comes to the *Conclusion* of it, as he has always considered himself here no more than a *Stranger* and *Sojourner* in his Way to a better Country, he is ready to leave it with the same *Indifference*, with the same *Chearfulness*, that a *Traveller* does his *Inn*. *Heathens* and *Infidels* indeed may well be supposed *uneasy* under the Apprehension of Death, because they are so much at a loss to know what will be their Condition after it; but the Christian, who has a clear and distinct Prospect beyond the Grave into the other World, may easily support himself under the Thoughts of his Dissolution. A *Dissolution* indeed, (if it should be thought the *Extinction* of our Beings, and a *Period* put to all our Enjoyments) to those, who have a natural Desire (as all Men have) of *Immortality* and Happiness, would be a dreadful and disconsolate Thing: But (*i*) he, who, with the *Eye* of Faith, views Death, as a Passage only to a better Life; who is confident, that the State he is going to enter upon, will be infinitely for his Advantage, a *Translation* from *Weariness* to Rest, from *Misery* to Happiness, from *Slavery* to Freedom, and from *earthly Sorrow*

(*a*) *Seed*'s Ser. Vol. II. (*b*) Eccl. vii. 14. (*c*) *Seed*'s Ser. Vol. II. (*d*) *Collier* in his Essay on old Age. (*e*) Prov. xvi. 31. (*f*) *Tully* de Senectute. (*g*) *Collier*'s Essay. (*h*) *Edwards*'s Body of Divin. (*i*) *Smalridge*'s Ser.

to heavenly and everlaſting Joy; he, who aſſuredly knows, I ſay, (*a*) *that there is laid up for him a Crown of Righteouſneſs, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to him at the great Day of Accounts,* may very naturally deſire, with St. *Paul,* (*b*) *to depart, and to be with Chriſt, which is far better; for,* (*c*) *bleſſed are the Dead, which die in the Lord, yea ſo ſaith the Spirit, for they reſt from their Labours, and their Works do follow them.*

DISSERTATION V.

The Divine Power and Wiſdom in the Works of the CREATION.

The Excellency *of God's Works.*

(*d*) *THE Works of the Lord are great, ſought out by all them, who take Pleaſure therein,* ſays the *Pſalmiſt,* who himſelf not only took *Delight* in the Contemplation of the Works of Nature, but was thereby excited to *compoſe* many divine and elegant *Hymns* in praiſe of their great *Creator.* Moſt Men indeed, who have any tolerable Capacity, have a natural Diſpoſition to praiſe and admire whatever is the *Product* of *Art* or Ingenuity: (*e*) A curious *Machine,* a regular *Building,* a fine *Picture,* a beautiful *Landſkip* immediately ſtrike us: We ſtand gazing on them with Pleaſure and Wonder, and the more we behold them, the more we admire. But now, there is no manner of Compariſon between the moſt exquiſite *Compoſition* of human Invention, and the wonderful *Fabrick* of the World; between the moſt lively Similitude made by *Sculpture* or *Painting,* or the natural *Face* or *Perſon* of a Man; between the faireſt *Map* or *Landſkip* of any Country, and the very Country itſelf, diverſified with real Rocks, and Hills, and Plains, cover'd with a Variety of Verdure, and adorn'd with all Sorts of living Creatures. Why is it then, that we are ſo *fond* of the Productions of human Art, and ſo *ſlightly* regard the Operations of *God's Hand?* Even why, but that we do not view them both with the ſame Meaſure of Attention? For if we were once ſeriouſly to conſider (*f*) the prodigious *Magnitude* and Extent of the whole Creation; the Conſtancy of ſome Appearances, and the regular Changes and Revolutions of others; the vaſt *Number* and Variety of Creatures; the exquiſite *Minuteneſs* of the ſeveral Parts, of which they are compos'd; the *Beauty, Order,* and *Regularity* of every diſtinct Species; the curious Structure of ſo many different Sorts of Animals; the ſeveral States and Conditions of their Life; and the plentiful Proviſion made for the Preſervation, and Continuance of their Kind: If we ſhould once carefully enquire into theſe Things, I ſay, our profound Veneration for their Creator would riſe, in proportion to the wonderful Compoſition of what we ſet ourſelves to contemplate.

Their Compaſs *and* Extent.

WHAT the *Compaſs* and *Extent* of the Works of Creation are ſuppoſed to be, we may, in ſome meaſure, gueſs from the *Computations,* which learned Men have made of the *Bigneſs,* and *Diſtance* of *celeſtial* Bodies. (*g*) The *Sun,* according to the moſt exact *Calculations,* is thought to be *eight,* or *ten Times,* and every *fix'd Star* of the firſt Magnitude, above an *hundred Times,* larger than the whole Earth; and yet, upon a farther Obſervation, theſe *Aſtronomers* perhaps may be found to fall ſhort in their Eſtimate. (*h*) From the Earth to the Sun is above *eighty-ſix Millions of* Engliſh *Miles*; and yet, * this is but *little,* in Compariſon of the Diſtance of the fix'd Stars, we can ſee with our *naked Eye,* and extremely *leſs,* in Compariſon of thoſe, which we cannot perceive without the help of *Glaſſes.* (*i*) Theſe Stars indeed are not all placed in one and the

(*a*) 2 Tim. iv. 8. (*b*) Phil. i. 23. (*c*) Rev. xiv. 13. (*d*) Pſal. cxi. 2. (*e*) *Abernethy's* Ser. Vol. I. (*f*) *Leng's* Ser. at *Boyle's* Lect. (*g*) *Jenkins's* Reaſonableneſs, Vol. II. (*h*) *Derham's* Aſtro-Theology.

* The Earth is computed to be above *ſeventeen Millions of* German *Miles* diſtant from the Sun, and a Bullet, carried with the ſame Swiftneſs, that it has, when it is ſhot out of a *Cannon,* ſuppoſing it mov'd from the Earth to the Sun, would ſpend *twenty-five Years* in its Paſſage: To move from *Jupiter* to the Sun, it would require *one hundred and twenty-five Years*: And from *Saturn* thither, *two hundred and fifty Years.* But ſuch a Bullet, (according to Mr. *Huygens's* Computation) would ſpend almoſt *ſeven hundred thouſand Years* in its Paſſage between us, and one of the neareſt of the *fix'd* Stars. He ſpeaks concerning the neareſt of them, and then ſtands amaz'd to think, what a prodigious Number beſides there muſt be of thoſe, which are placed ſo deep in the vaſt Spaces of Heaven, as to be as remote from *theſe,* as theſe are from the Sun. *Jenkins's* Reaſonableneſs, Vol. II. and *Huygens's* Conjecture concerning the *Planetary* Worlds.

(*i*) *Ray* on the Creation.

the ſame *ſpherical Superficies*, at equal Diſtance from us, (as they were once imagin'd to be) but are *variouſly* ſituate, ſome *nearer*, ſome *farther* from us, and ſome perhaps many Degrees more *remote*, than the moſt diſtant ones we can eſpy with the beſt Helps of human Invention. Upon this *Hypotheſis* ſome have imagined, that not only * all the *Planets*, within our *Solar Syſtem*, are inhabited, but that the fix'd Stars, which ſhine with their unborrow'd Light, † are the *Centers* of other *Syſtems*, even as the Sun is of *this*; that they are ſurrounded with a Company of *Planets* moving about them, in the ſame Order, as ours do about the *Sun*; and that each of theſe Planets is furniſh'd with a great Variety of Creatures, both *animate* and *inanimate*, even as our *Earth* is: But then, how many there may be of theſe *Syſtems*, and how far remote from each other, as well as from us, no mortal Man can pretend, with the leaſt Degree of *Probability*, to conjecture.

Their great Number.

THESE *Speculations*, which, in the main, ſeem to be juſt, as being founded upon the *Magnitude* and *Diſtance* of *celeſtial* Bodies, not only give us a proper *Idea* of the *Power* and Magnificence of God, but acquaint us likewiſe with the vaſt *Number* and *Variety* of Creatures, that muſt be contain'd in this *far-extended Univerſe*: For if God, in this manner, has raiſed *Worlds above Worlds*, far beyond the Reach of human Underſtanding; ſtock'd them with Inhabitants, as ‡ *different* in kind, as they are *diſtant* in Place; and furniſh'd theſe Inhabitants with all proper Conveniences and Accommodations, what an infinite Number of Beings muſt this Suppoſition produce? But (to content ourſelves with what we ſee and know) (*a*) on the *Surface* of the Earth, what an incredible Number of Vegetables, Trees, Plants, Shrubs, Graſſes, with their ſeveral diſtinct Seeds, Leaves, Flowers, and Fruits? In its *Bowels*, how many Kinds of Foſſils, Stones, Gems, Minerals, and Metals? In its *Waters*, and circumambient Air, how many Tribes of *Animals*, of different Bulk and Figure, Beaſts, Birds, Fiſhes, and Inſects? And, if the different *Kinds* are ſo many, how far above the Power of all *Arithmetick* muſt the Number of their *Individuals* ſwell?

Their Beauty and Elegance.

IT is not however the *Vaſtneſs* and *Variety* of the Works of Nature, but their great *Beauty* likewiſe, and the *Fineneſs* of their Compoſition, that deſerves our Obſervation. " Whatever is *natural* (ſays *(b)* " an Author of no ſmall Skill in theſe Mat- " ters) when beheld through a *Microſcope*, " appears exquiſitely form'd, and adorn'd " with all imaginable Elegance and Beauty. " There are ſuch inimitable *Gildings* in the " ſmalleſt Seeds of Plants, but eſpecially in " the Parts of Animals, in the Head or " Eye

* There are ſome learned Men, that are of a contrary Opinion, and maintain, that it is a ſufficient Reaſon for God's making, and preſerving ſuch vaſt Bodies in their ſeveral *Orbs* and Motions, that they might remain as proper Objects for the *Contemplation* of Men, and the *Admiration* of Angels; that *fix'd* Stars, tho' not the *Centers* of any *Syſtems*, might be of uſe to keep the circumjacent Air, or *Æther*, in Motion, which might otherwiſe *ſtagnate*, and to ſupply the Sun conſtantly with *luminous* Matter, in Proportion to what it emitted; and that the *Planets*, tho' deſtitute of Inhabitants now, might *originally* have been deſign'd for *Colonies* of Mankind, to be tranſplanted from the Earth, as it grew over-ſtocked, had they continued *innocent* and *immortal*; and now, that they are become mortal by their Sin, may be employed, at the End of the World, either as *Manſions* for the Righteous, or Places of *Puniſhment* for the Wicked, after the Reſurrection; and that, in the mean time, being placed at proper *Diſtances*, by their various Motions they contribute to keep the World at a *Poiſe*, and the ſeveral Parts of it in an *Æquilibrium* by their *Gravitation* upon one another. *Jenkins*'s Reaſonableneſs, Vol. II.

† " You grant (ſays an ingenious Author) that, when two Things are like one another in all viſible " Reſpects, it is poſſible they may be like one another in thoſe Things, that are not viſible, if you have not " ſome good Reaſon to believe otherwiſe. Now my Way of arguing is this——The Moon is *inhabited*, be- " cauſe it is like the *Earth*, and the other Planets are inhabited, becauſe they are like the *Moon*. The fixed " Stars I find like the *Sun*, which is the *Center* of its *Vortex*, and therefore I attribute to them whatever is " proper to him. Only it is to be obſerved, that as our Sun is much nearer to us, than the Suns of other *Vortexes*, " its Light makes a much greater *Impreſſion* on our Eyes, than theirs do. We ſee nothing, but the Light of " our own Sun, and when we ſee that, it *darkens* and hinders us from ſeeing any other Light: But, in a- " nother great *Vortex*, there is another Sun, which rules and governs, and, in its Turn, extinguiſhes the " Light of our Sun, which is never ſeen, but in the Night, with the reſt of the other Suns, *i. e.* the fixed Stars. *Fontenelle*'s Plurality of Worlds.

‡ It has been ſuggeſted by learned Men, that the *Planets* may poſſibly be inhabited by rational Creatures of a *different* Nature from Mankind; that their *Souls* may be of an inferior or ſuperior Order to ours; their Bodies of a different Form and Compoſition; and that there may be different *Laws* of Union and Communion between the Operations of their Souls, and the Motions of their Bodies; for there is no Neceſſity to believe, that there can be no Sort of *rational* Animals, but Mankind. *Jenkins*'s Reaſonableneſs, Vol. II.

(*a*) *Leng*'s Ser. at *Boyle*'s Lect. (*b*) *Wilkins*'s Nat. Relig.

" Eye of a ſmall Fly; ſuch *Accuracy*, *Or-*
" *der*, and *Symmetry* in the Frame of the
" moſt *minute* Creatures, as no Man is able
" to conceive, without ſeeing them:
" Whereas the moſt curious Works of *Art*,
" the ſharpeſt and fineſt *Needle*, for In-
" ſtance, appears as a blunt rough *Bar of*
" *Iron*, coming from the *Furnace*, or the
" *Forge*, and the moſt accurate *Engravings*
" or *Emboſſments* ſeem ſuch rude, bun-
" gling, and deform'd Work, as if they had
" been done with a *Mattock*, or *Trowel*.
" So vaſt a Difference is there between the
" Skill of Nature, and the Rudeneſs and
" Imperfection of Art! Nay, Millions of
* entire and perfect Animals there are, ſo very ſmall, that they can hardly be diſcern-ed by the *naked Eye*, and yet, notwithſtand-ing, by the Help of *Glaſſes*, they appear to have their ſeveral *organical* Parts as curiouſly fram'd, and fitted to their ſeveral Uſes, as thoſe of a much larger Size. Now in all theſe Creatures, (how minute ſoever) tho' we may not ſuppoſe a regular *Circulation* of *Blood* and other *Fluids*, yet we cannot but imagine, that they muſt have *Nerves*, *Joints*, and *Muſcles*, otherwiſe they could not move; and yet *(a)* in the *muſcular Mo-tion*, the Parts are ſo exceeding ſmall and curious, that, even in *greater* Animals, many Millions of Millions of diſtinct Parts and Operations (as may be ſeen through a *Microſcope)* are requir'd to the Performance of it: How ſurpriſingly, and almoſt infi-nitely *ſmall* then muſt thoſe Parts be, which give ſuch *Activity* to theſe Creatures, if we take them *ſingly*, when a *compound* Body, made of ſo great a Number of them, is hardly big enough to be *viſible!*

Their Con-ſtancy *and* Variety.

BUT beſides the *Elegance* and *Curioſity*, there is a *Conſtancy*, as well as *Variety* in the *inanimate* Part of the Creation, which de-clares its Author to be *(b) wonderful in Coun-ſel, and excellent in Working*. If we conſider the *heavenly Bodies*, we cannot but perceive a ſettled *Certainty* in their Motions and Re-volutions; but then they produce Day and Night, Summer and Winter, which are Nature's great *Changes* and Viciſſitudes. *(c)* If we turn our Eyes up in the *Day-time*, our Sight terminates in a vaſt Azure *Convex*, without any Diverſity at all, but that we ſee in it a *luminous fiery Globe*, which we conclude to be the *Fountain* of Light; but when we turn our Eyes the ſame Way at *Night*, the Proſpect is quite chang'd: The great ruling *Luminary* is withdrawn; the Sky is either cover'd with *Blackneſs of Darkneſs*, or beſpangled with innumerable leſſer Lights, and with one *larger* than the reſt, conſpicuous, tho' pale, and ſhining with a borrow'd Luſtre. If we look upon the *Earth*, the *Hills* indeed, we ſee, are *everlaſting*, and the Rocks not to be remov'd out of their Places: But ſtill there is *Change* and *Diverſity* enough; Li-quid *Water*, ſtanding *Lakes*, lofty *Moun-tains*, lowly *Valleys*; in one Place ſtately *Groves*, in another flowery *Meadows*; here waſte and parched *Deſarts*, and there well-cultivated *Fields*, cover'd with Corn or Graſs, and ſtock'd with a great Variety of Creatures; *Rivers* running in haſte to the Sea, and returning again as haſtily in *Tides*; *Animals*, that are but ſhort-liv'd, perpetu-ating their Species in a conſtant Succeſſion, and tender Herbs, which ſeem to *die*, every Winter, *reviving* again in the Spring.

Their Relation *and* Connec-tion.

BUT, beſides this ſettled *Inconſtancy* (if we may ſo call it) wherein *inanimate* Things are known to act, there is plainly a natural *Relation* and *Correſpondence* between them: For, what Man of the meaneſt Capacity can be ignorant, that, from the *Sun* there is a *Communication* of Light and Heat to the *Earth*, which is the Cauſe of the various Productions upon its *Surface*; and that, by its *genial* Warmth, Herbs and Plants of different kinds ſpring up from ſmall Seeds, and are nouriſhed, ſome into ſtrong *Stalks*, ſome into low *Shrubs*, and ſome into ſtately *Trees*, all bearing Fruits, which are the Food of Animals? Who is ſo ſenſeleſs, as not to know, *(d)* that *Fire* cheriſhes and re-vives the Body, and is indeed that *vital Flame*, which keeps the whole *Machine* in Motion, and makes it a fit *Organ* for the Mind to actuate; that the *Air*, we breathe, is

* Mr. *Leuenhoek*, of *Delft* in *Holland*, had diſcovered prodigious Quantities of *Animalcula* in Pepper-Water. His Obſervations our learned Countryman Dr. *Hook* confirmed, and improved; for he affirms, that *ten*, *thirty*, nay, above *forty* Thouſand of theſe little living Creatures may be ſeen in a Quantity of Water, no bigger than a Grain of *Millet*; and then informs us, " that, having diſcovered vaſt Multitudes of thoſe exceeding ſmall " Creatures, which Mr. *Leuenhoek* had deſcribed, upon making uſe of other Lights and Glaſſes, he not only " *magnified* thoſe, he had diſcovered, to a very great Bigneſs; but diſcovered many other Sorts, very much " ſmaller than thoſe, he firſt ſaw, and ſome of them ſo exceedingly ſmall, that Millions of Millions might be " contained in one Drop of Water. *Ray* on the Creation.

(a) *Ray* on the Creation, and *Hook*'s Microſcopium. *(b)* Iſa. xxxviii. 39. *(c)* *Abernethy*'s Serm. Vol. I. *(d)* *Ray* on the Creation.

is abſolutely neceſſary for the Preſervation of all Creatures, as it contains the *Fuel* of the *vital* Flame we ſpeak of, without which it would ſpeedily languiſh and go out: That *Water* not only ſerves the inferior Uſes of Waſhing, Bathing, &c. but anſwers the Purpoſes of *Vegetation*, and affords the greateſt Share of *Matter* in all Productions; and that the *Earth*, which is the *Baſis* and *Foundation* of all Things, yields *Food* and *Suſtenance*, and, in ſome meaſure, *Clothing*; pleaſant *Proſpects*, grateful *Taſtes*, fragrant *Odours*, and melodious *Sounds*, to gratify their Senſes? So that, upon this ſhort Survey of the inanimate Works of God, (*a*) there appears an obvious *Congruity* in the Whole; that the Motions of the *heavenly Bodies* are under ſuch a *Direction*, as to anſwer the End of ſuſtaining a Multitude of Beings in their regular Succeſſions; that *ſimple* and *elementary* Bodies are ſo conſtituted, as to contribute to the Support and Nouriſhment of all Kind of *Animals*; and that all Kind of Animals are under an apparent *Oeconomy*, whereby they are rendered uſeful to each other, and all * *ſubſervient* to Man.

The Excellency of Man's Compoſition.

(b) MAN indeed, by the very Structure of his Body, and the Faculty of *Speech*, or of communicating his Thoughts by *articulate* Sounds, ſeems to have a *natural Dominion* over other Creatures. The Regularity of his *Shape*, the Juſtneſs of his *Stature*, the Situation of his *Parts*, the Gracefulneſs of his *Motion*, and Majeſty of his *Countenance* proclaim him the Lord of this inferior Creation: But what diſtinguiſhes him more eminently, and ſets him in a Rank vaſtly ſuperior to his Fellow Creatures, are the Faculties of his *intellectual* Part; (*c*) the Reach and Compaſs of its *Underſtanding*, the prodigious Quickneſs of its *Thought*, the Piercingneſs of its *Judgment*, the Subtilty of its *Invention*; the Power of its *Wiſdom*, the Depth of its *Memory*, the Length of its *Foreſight*, and, in ſhort, its *divine* Nature and Operations, which loudly declare, (*d*) that it was *the Lord, who formed the Spirit of Man in him.*

And the Make and Inſtinct of Animals.

'TIS no ſmall Demonſtration however of the infinite *Power* and *Wiſdom* of God, that he has ſtock'd this *Globe* with ſuch a noble Set of Animals; that he has given them Bodies curiouſly fitted with all the *Veſſels* and *Fluids*, all the Organs and Inſtruments of Life, Motion, and Senſation, and nicely adjuſted them to the *Temperature* of the Regions, they were to inhabit; that he hath, all along, kept up a *Diſtinction* of *Sexes*, a due *Proportion* of the Numbers of each Sex, and ſuch a juſt *Balance* in the *Animal* World, as neither to admit of Increaſe or Diminution, but, (*e*) *as one Generation paſſeth away, ſo another Generation cometh*; that he hath implanted in their Nature, a tender Care and Concern for their Young, and ſeveral other wonderful *Inſtincts*, differing in Kinds, and yet, in all of the ſame *Species* conſtantly the *ſame*, *(f)* whereby they know how to form the Places of their *Habitation* and Security, with ſuch admirable *Skill* and Contrivance, as far ſurpaſs all human Imitation; and, in ſhort, that he hath made an ample Proviſion of Food for ſuch a large *Family* of Animals, as every where poſſeſs the *terraqueous* Globe, in the dry Land, and in the Sea and Rivers, in the *Torrid* and *Frigid* Zones, as well as *temperate*: *(g) Theſe wait all upon thee, O Lord, that thou mayeſt give them Meat in due Seaſon: When thou giveſt it them, they gather it; and when thou openeſt thy Hand, they are filled with Good: When thou hideſt thy Face, they are troubled; when thou takeſt away their Breath, they die, and turn again to their Duſt: But the glorious Majeſty of the Lord ſhall endure for ever; the Lord ſhall rejoice in his Works; and therefore praiſe thou the Lord, O my Soul, praiſe the Lord.*

Together with God's Proviſion for them.

THIS ſeems to be a ſufficient Expoſition of the *firſt* Article of the Apoſtles Creed,

The Recapitulation, and Uſe of the Whole.

Z *I believe*

(*a*) *Abernethy*'s Ser. Vol. I.

* That all this viſible World was created for Man, is a Notion as old as *Ariſtotle*; for he lays it down as an allowed *Principle*, that *Plants were made for Animals, and the other Animals for the Sake of Man; the tame ones, both for Uſe and Food, the wild ones, if not all, yet, at leaſt, the greateſt Part of them, for Food, and Clothing; and other Conveniences; and that therefore, if Nature makes nothing imperfect, or in vain, ſhe muſt have made all Things for Man.* But though this be vulgarly received, yet there are ſome wiſe Men who are of a different Opinion: For Dr. *More* affirms, "That Creatures are made to *enjoy* themſelves, as well as to *ſerve* us; and "that it is a groſs Piece of Ignorance and *Ruſticity* to think otherwiſe: For if a *good Man be merciful to* "*his Beaſt*, then ſurely a good God is bountiful, and benign, and takes Pleaſure, that all his Creatures enjoy "themſelves, that have Life and Senſe, and are capable of Enjoyment, *Antid.* againſt Atheiſm, and *Ray* on "the Creation.

(*b*) *Leng*'s Ser. at *Boyle*'s Lect. (*c*) *Derham*'s Ser. ibid. (*d*) Zech. xii. 1. (*e*) Eccl. i. 4. (*f*) *Leng*'s and *Derham*'s Ser. at *Boyle*'s Lect. and *Ray* on the Creation. (*g*) Pſal. civ. 27, &c.

I believe in God, the Father, Almighty, Maker of Heaven and Earth, i. e. " I am " fully perſuaded, and convinced, from the " *Beginning* and Origin of all Things, the " *Beauty* and Order of the Univerſe, the " continual *regular* Preſervation of it, the " *curious* Make of human Bodies, the *wonderful* Faculties of the Soul, the *natural* " Teſtimony of Conſcience, and the *general* " Conſent of all Nations, together with " many other Arguments, that might be " produced, that there is a GOD, *i. e.* one, " *ſimple*, and uncompounded Being; in his " *Nature* ſpiritual, eternal, and immutable, " ſelf-exiſtent, ſelf-ſufficient, infinite in all " Perfections, omnipotent, omniſcient, om- " nipreſent, juſt and righteous, pure and " holy, merciful and good: That, in this " one *ſimple* and uncompounded Being, there " are, nevertheleſs, *three* diſtinct *Perſons* " ſubſiſting, *Father*, *Son*, and *Holy Ghoſt*; " and that the *firſt* of theſe is called *Father*, " not only by Right of *Creation*, and as he " gives Life to all intelligent Beings in the " World; not only by Right of *Adoption*, " and as he has beſtowed upon us the high " Privilege of *being called his Sons*; but, " in a more ſignal and *tranſcendent* Man- " ner, as he is the Father of one *proper* and " *peculiar* Son, even our *Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, " whom, by way of *eternal Generation*, he " hath begotten of the ſame *Nature* and Ma- " jeſty, *co-equal* and *co-eſſential* with himſelf: " That this God has not only an abſolute " Power in *acting*, ſo that *with him nothing* " *is impoſſible*, but an uncontroulable *Rule* " and *Sovereignty* likewiſe over all Things, " without Exception; over every Thing " without Limitation; but more particular- " ly over Kingdoms and States; and that this " Dominion he exerciſes not in an *arbitrary* " Manner, but with the moſt perfect Wiſ- " dom, Goodneſs, and Equity: And laſtly, " that this God is the firſt *Cauſe* and *Crea-* " *tor* of all Things, whether in Heaven " or Earth, both *viſible* and *inviſible*, ſome " of which he made in an *Inſtant*, and " with a Word's ſpeaking, out of *Nothing*; " others out of *pre-exiſtent* Matter, and in " a *gradual* Proceſs, but all, by the *Mi-* " *niſtry* of his beloved Son, and for the " *Manifeſtation* of his own Glory." And the proper Reſult of our believing all this muſt be —the higheſt *Veneration* and *Eſteem* of *God*, upon account of his *ineffable* Nature and Perfections; the *moſt ardent Love and Affection* for our being, in *Chriſt*, the Objects of his *paternal* Care; an *entire Truſt and Confidence* under his Protection and Providence; *Comfort and Conſolation* in all the Variety of our Conditions; *Praiſe and Adoration*, upon the Contemplation of his ſtupendous Works; a *deep Humiliation*, upon the Proſpect of our own *comparative* Littleneſs; an *awful Reverence* of the Majeſty, and *chearful Obedience* to the Will, of him, in whom *we live, move, and have our Being*.



CHAP.

CHAP. II. SECT. I.

ARTICLE II.

* And in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.

The EXPOSITION.

In Jesus.

AFTER the *Creed* has acquainted us with the *Nature* and *Attributes*, the *Relation* and *Operations* of God the Father, the *first Person* in the blessed *Trinity*, it immediately introduces us to the *second*, *Jesus Christ*, *his only Son our Lord*; and here relates the many *Adventures* of his Love towards us, and the great *Mystery of Godliness*, in the various Steps of his *Humiliation* and *Exaltation*. When therefore we say, *I believe in Jesus*, our Meaning is, that we are fully persuaded and convinced, that, in the Reign of *Augustus Cæsar*, (as we learn from *History*) there was born, in *Judæa*, † a Person of an eminent Character, who liv'd, and suffer'd (as we learn again) in the Time of *Tiberius*, and whose Name was *Jesus*, or *Jesus of Nazareth*, to distinguish him from others of the like *Appellation*.

The Meaning of the Name Jesus.

JESUS indeed ‡ was a Name common among the *Jews*, and, in Sense and Substance, is ‖ the same with *Joshua*, that famous Leader of old, who, after the Death of *Moses*, settled the *Israelites* in the *promis'd*

* In the *Nicene*, and several other *Greek* Creeds, we profess to believe in *one Jesus Christ*, putting a particular *Emphasis* upon the Word *one*, which *Ruffinus* takes notice of, and assigns this Reason for it, *viz.* that the Antients so read it, in conformity to the Authority of St. *Paul*, that there is but *one Lord, and one God*, Eph. iv. 5, 6. Herein however the *Author of the History of the Creed* seems to be right, when he makes the Insertion of this *emphatical* Word ONE to have been occasioned by the horrid and blasphemous Imaginations of the *Gnosticks*, *Cerinthians*, and other Hereticks, who denied the *Unity* of our Saviour's Person, by separating *Jesus* from *Christ*. The Notion of *Cerinthus*, in particular, was, —— that *Jesus* was a mere Man, the Son of *Joseph* and *Mary*, but that *Christ*, after *Baptism*, descended into him from the *Pleroma* (as he call'd it) in the Shape of a *Dove*, and that, when *Jesus* came to suffer, *Christ*, who was *impassable*, left him, and return'd to the *Pleroma* again. Against these Heresies it was, (as *Irenæus* tells us) that St. *John* levelled his Gospel; and if so, there is no Wonder at all, that the Church, in her most early Days, should, in the *Rule* of her Faith, provide a proper *Antidote* against them: For *if these Figments were admitted*, (as the same Father reasons) *it would necessarily follow, that there are two* Christs; *for if one suffers, whilst the other is incapable of suffering, and one is born, whilst the other descends into him, and afterwards leaves him, it is most certain, that they are not one, but two*, Lib. 3. Chap. 18. But as the *western* Churches were not infested with these *Heresies*, their Creed (in the same Manner as ours does now) expressed this *Article* without the Addition of the Term *one*, and *in Jesus Christ his only Son*, &c. Crit. Hist. of the Apostles Creed, and *Fiddes's* Body of Divinity, Vol. I.

† That there was such a Person, as *Jesus Christ*, we have as good Ground to believe, as any Matter of *Fact* can be supposed capable of, because we find it attested by Men of all *Persuasions*, and by those, that were *Enemies*, as well as *Friends* to his Rellgion. This is the Confession of the *Jews*, his greatest Adversaries, who call him by a Name of *Ignominy*, which, in their Language, signifies *the hanged Man*, and who, in their *Writings*, ever since that Time, and even now in their *Form* of *publick Worship*, mention him with *Detestation*: This the Confession of the *Heathens*, for so *Tacitus*, (in Book 15.) speaking of the Punishment of *Christians*, tells us, *That the Author of that Name was* Christ, *who, in the Reign of* Tiberius, *suffered Punishment, under his Procurator*, Pontius Pilate; and so *Suetonius*, in the Life of *Claudius*, (Chap. 25.) gives us to understand, "that that Emperor banished the *Jews* (so were Christians thought to be at first) out of *Rome*, by "Reason of the *Tumults*, which they raised upon the Incitation of one *Chrest*, or *Christ*;" and this is the Confession of all *Christians*, however dispersed over the Face of the whole Earth, not only *now*, but from the very *first* Commencement of their Religion; and whose Testimony, in this Respect, is more considerable, because they not only wrought *Miracles* in Confirmation of it, but sealed it with their own *Blood*. *Grotius* of the Truth of the Christian Religion, and *Towerson* on the Apostles Creed.

‡ For not only *Joshua*, the Son of *Nun*, is twice called by that Name, Acts vii. 25, and Heb. iv. 8. but we read in Scripture of one *Jesus, who was called* Justus, *a Fellow Worker with St.* Paul, Col. iv. 11. and of a *certain Sorcerer*, a *Jew*, whose Name was *Barjesus*, that is, the Son of *Jesus*, Acts xiii. 6. *Josephus*, in his History, mentions one *Jesus*, the Son of *Ananus*; *another*, the Son of *Saphates*; and a *third*, the Son of *Judas*, slain in the Temple; even as *Ecclesiasticus* is called the Wisdom of *Jesus*, the Son of *Sirach*, and that *Sirach*, the Son of another *Jesus*. *Pearson* on the Creed.

‖ Some of the antient Christians thought it a *Greek* Name, and derived it from a Word, which signifies to *heal*; but though this might convey a good and useful Notion, *viz.* that *Christ* was an *Healer*, or *spiritual Physician*;

promis'd Land, and ſubdued the Enemies, that would have oppoſed their *Entrance*. In whatſoever Langauge we take the Word, the proper Signification of it is a *Saviour*: And this was a Title of ſo great Honour and Renown, (*a*) that the antient *Grecians*, after any ſignal Deliverance, were wont to give it to their *Gods only*, and, under that Notion, to build Temples, and conſecrate Altars to them; though, in Proceſs of Time, it came to be proſtituted to the baſe Purpoſes of *Flattery*, and beſtowed on any *great Man* in Power, from whom, thoſe, that were about him, or depended on him, expected Protection, or Promotion. But whatever Motives *Heathens* might have to give their Gods and great Men the Title of *Saviours*, we know, that this Name belongs unto *Chriſt* in a more *ſublime* and *peculiar* Manner, for as much as *(b) there is none other Name under Heaven, given among Men, whereby we muſt be ſaved.*

And why given to our Saviour.

(c) INSTANCES in Scripture * are not many, where Men have had their Names determin'd by a particular *Appointment* of Heaven, and given them before their *Birth*. Wherever this happened, it might reaſonably be expected, not only that there ſhould be ſome *peculiar Significancy* in the Name itſelf, but that the *Perſon*, diſtinguiſhed by it, ſhould be remarkable for ſome *extraordinary* Qualities and Tranſactions, which this Appellation was deſign'd to denote. When *therefore (d) the Fulneſs of Time was come, for God to ſend forth his Son, made of a Woman, made under the Law, to redeem them, that were under the Law, that we might receive the Adoption of Sons*, he took Care to ſignify before-hand, that a great and wonderful Perſon was coming into the World; for ſo, in the *Salutation*, which the Angel gives the bleſſed *Virgin*, he tells her, that ſhe (*e*) *ſhould conceive in her Womb, and bring forth a Son, and call his Name* Jeſus; and, in the *Dream*, which God ſent upon *Joſeph*, he acquainted him, not only with the *Appellation* itſelf, but with the *Interpretation* of it likewiſe; *(f) Thou ſhalt call his Name* Jeſus, *for he ſhall ſave his People from their Sins:* And therefore, to ſhew the *Analogy* between the *Name*, that was given our Lord from Heaven, and the *Work*, which he came into the World to accompliſh, in the farther Expoſition of this Part of the *Article*, I am to obſerve, and explain, by what *Ways* and *Means* it is that *he ſaves*, or delivers us *from our Sins.*

The Nature of Sin.

(g) SIN indeed, as it regards God, is not only a *Tranſgreſſion* of his moſt righteous Laws, but an Act of *Rebellion* likewiſe againſt the great Creator and Preſerver of all Things, an *Oppoſition* to the Will of the Supreme *Lord* and Governor of the Univerſe; and, as it implies a *Contempt* of infinite Goodneſs, and vile *Ingratitude* to the moſt endearing Obligations, it cannot fail of ſtirring up the Wrath of an *Avenger*, whoſe *Power* enables him, and whoſe *Truth* engages him to puniſh ſuch Diſobedience with the utmoſt *Severity*. It may very well therefore exerciſe our Wonder, how Perſons, under theſe Aggravations of Guilt, could ever eſcape Puniſhment, and be reſtored to the Favour and Acceptance of God again; but that, upon farther Examination, we ſhall find, that there might poſſibly be ſome *Conſiderations*, both in *original* and *actual* Sin, which might move the divine Nature to *Pity* and Compaſſion, and thence find out a *Method* for Man's *Recovery*.

Some Alleviation of it, which might incline the Divine Compaſſion.

(h) IT ſeems to be ſome *Mitigation* then of the *firſt* Tranſgreſſion, that our Parents, *Adam* and *Eve*, while as yet *unexperienced*, were

Phyſician; yet it is a Miſtake, and a Miſtake which proceeded from their Ignorance of the *Hebrew* Tongue, wherein *Jehoſhua* and *Jeſus* are both the ſame. *Jehoſhua*, by Contraction was called *Joſhua*, or *Jeſhua*, which the *Talmudiſts* pronounced *Jeſhu*, (even as they did *Hoſea*, *Hoſe*) and, in imitation of them, the *Apoſtles*, by adding a *Greek* Termination, made it *Jeſus*. The learned Biſhop *Pearſon* has aſſigned ſomeReaſons, why the Name of *Hoſea*, by which this famous Son of *Nun* was *originally* called, came to be changed by *Moſes* into that of *Jehoſhua*, Numb. xiii. 16. and what the *myſtical* Meaning was of ſuch an Alteration; but in this he ſeems to be not a little *abſtruſe*. He has likewiſe drawn a long *Parallel* between *Joſhua*, and our *Jeſus*, in order to ſhew, in what Inſtances of his Life that *Leader of the Jews* was a *Type* of the *Captain of our Salvation:* But the *Alluſions*, he ſuppoſes, ſeem to be a little *viſionary*, and too far fetch'd; as nothing indeed is *natural*, or alike, in the whole *Compariſon*, except, where he makes *Canaan* an *Emblem* of *Heaven*, and *Joſhua*'s ſubduing the Inhabitants of that Country, *prefigurative* of our Lord's conquering our *ſpiritual* Enemies. *Edwards*'s Body, and *Pearſon* on the Creed. Page 75.

(*a*) *Pearſon* on the Creed. (*b*) Acts iv. 12. (*c*) *Stanhope*'s Epiſt. and Goſp. Vol I.

* The only Inſtances of this Kind, are, in that of *Solomon*, 1 Chron. xxii. 9, 10. that of *Joſiah*, 1 Kings xiii. 2. that of *Cyrus*, Iſa. xiv. 1. and of *John* the *Baptiſt*, Luke i. 13, 17. *Stanhope*'s Ep. and Goſp. Vol. I.

(*d*) Gal. iv. 5. (*e*) Luke i. 3. (*f*) Mat. i. 41. (*g*) *Stanhope*'s Ep. and Goſp. Vol. I. (*h*) *Bradford*'s Ser. at *Boyle*'s Lect.

were ſet upon by a *ſubtile* and malicious Enemy, who made his Attack *firſt* upon the *weaker* Sex, and, by her Perſuaſion, prevail'd upon the Man; that he *impos'd* upon their Underſtanding * by *Craft* and Confidence; *inveigled* them by a *ſly* and falſe Suggeſtion; and, without giving them Time to conſult either God, or their own Reaſon, *hurried* them on to the Commiſſion of a raſh and dangerous Act, which expoſed themſelves and their Poſterity to all the evil Conſequences, that either *naturally* or *judicially* followed. And, in like manner, in thoſe, who grow up from a State of *Infancy*, it ſeems to be ſome *Alleviation* of their Sin, that their bodily Tempers, which have a powerful Influence over their Minds, were *ſuch*, as their Parents did communicate; that their *Senſes* are many Years *exerciſed*, and Prepoſſeſſions gain'd, before their Reaſon is thoroughly awake; that, during this Time, they are ſurrounded with all manner of *Temptations*, led aſide frequently by dangerous *Examples*, and very often corrupted by a vicious *Education*; that, even in thoſe, who have eſcaped theſe Snares and Seductions, the beſt Inclinations are not exempt from *treacherous* Propenſions to Ill; the Injections of *Satan* are ſometimes ſo *ſtrong*, and the Allurements of *Senſe* ſo *ſtupifying*, that the moſt *prudent* Advertency, and the moſt *manly* Reſolution cannot help being ſurpriſed and overcome. Theſe Conſiderations, I ſay, as they are ſome Mitigations of Guilt, could hardly fail of raiſing Compaſſion in the Breaſt of a good and gracious God; and, when Compaſſion once began to *work*, it could not be long, before an *Expedient* for their Reſtoration came to be concluded on.

The ſuppoſed Agreement between the Father and Son.

(a) For *(to ſpeak after the Manner of Men)* we may ſuppoſe, that *God the Father*, out of his mere Motion, and free Grace, propounded to his *Son* the Redemption of a ſinful World, by an *Exchange* of Perſon and Puniſhment, and by offering to accept of a ſuitable *Satisfaction* to his offended *Juſtice*, upon certain *Terms* and *Conditions*, that Man, on his Part, was afterwards to perform; that the Son, out of a tender Love to Mankind, accepted of his Father's *Propoſal*, and condeſcended to become the *Subſtitute*, and Repreſentative of Sinners, to ſuſtain their Character, and ſuffer their Puniſhment, in order to accompliſh their Salvation; and that, in a Time, which the divine Wiſdom did then prefix, this *Agreement* ſhould be put in Execution, as it certainly was, when the Son of God came from Heaven, and aſſum'd our Nature, and, in that Nature, ſuffer'd, and died to abſolve his *Engagement* to his Father, and effect the World's *Redemption*.

The World perhaps would have thought themſelves more oblig'd to him, had he come to redeem them from *temporal* Evils and Calamities; to make them *victorious* over all Dangers, and *triumphant* over all Oppoſitions; but this was a *Redemption*, not ſuitable to their Condition, nor any ways comporting with the great Undertaking of the Son of God. This, and much more he might have done for us: But he had higher Views, and nobler Deſigns. He came to viſit *the Spirits in Priſon*; to ranſome captive Souls; and to *ſave us from our Sins*, by delivering us, not only from the *Guilt* and *Puniſhment*, but from the *Power* and *Dominion* of them likewiſe.

How Chriſt ſaved us from the Guilt *of Sin.*

SIN (as we ſaid before) is a *Tranſgreſſion of the Law*; that *Tranſgreſſion* involves us in *Guilt*; that Guilt excites God's *Diſpleaſure*; that Diſpleaſure conſigns us to *Puniſhment*; and that Puniſhment is no leſs than *eternal Death*.† Where then ſhall we find a Perſon to extricate us from all theſe *Difficulties*; to

* Some are of Opinion, that the Devil, the better to execute his Deſign, *climbed* the Tree in the Form of a *Serpent*, and, upon eating the forbidden Fruit, transformed himſelf into the Appearance of a glorious *Angel*, and then, aſſuming the Voice of a *Man*, attributed this advantageous Change to the wonderful *Fruit* of the Tree; whilſt others think, that, as the Son of God was accuſtomed to converſe with our firſt Parents in a viſible *Shechinah*, or with the Attendance of glorious Angels, this wicked and malicious *Fiend* might take upon him the *Shape* and Appearance of one of them, and, being *a Lyar from the Beginning*, might aver, that he was of the Retinue of *the Son of God*; that from him they needed not apprehend any Harm; and therefore, when he ſuggeſted to them the eating of the *Tree of Knowledge*, he did it with no bad Intent, but purely out of Friendſhip and Kindneſs to them. Whether of theſe *Suppoſitions* be preferable, it is not eaſy to determine; but if either of them be admitted for Truth, it much *extenuates* the Guilt of our firſt Parents, and makes them fitter Objects of the divine Compaſſion. *Woodward*'s Ser. at *Boyle*'s Lect.

(a) Sam. Johnſon's Ser. Vol. II.

† Angels, however they may be commiſſioned by Almighty God to *miniſter* to the Good of Mankind, and however they may, in many Things, when ſo commiſſion'd, be *beneficial* to us; yet all their Service, all their Performances, and all their Righteouſneſs, could not belong to us, as our Righteouſneſs, becauſe not perform'd in

to perform an exact *Obedience* to the divine Commands; to expiate the *Guilt*, which the Violation of them incurr'd; to make *Satisfaction* to the Juſtice of an offended God; and to reverſe the dreadful Sentence of our *Condemnation?* He, who is capable of doing this for us, muſt be a Perſon of the ſame *Nature* with us, and yet of *inconceivable* Worth and Merit: *(a)* But now no created Being can * properly *merit*, becauſe the higher Excellencies any Creature is ennobled with, the more he ſtands *indebted* to the Giver of them, and the leſs *Proportion* do his beſt Services bear to the Favours, that he hath received. Our Saviour alone, who is God as well as Man, could *merit:* He could, out of his own *Fund*, diſcharge our Debts. The Dignity of his Perſon added Weight and Value to the *Price*, he paid for us; for *(b) we were not redeemed with corruptible Things, but with the precious Blood of* Chriſt, *as a Lamb, without Blemiſh, and without Spot.*

UNDER this View, the Characters of *taking away* Sins, and *ſaving the World*, are, in a peculiar Manner, aſcribed to *Jeſus*; for he is *(c) ſet forth as a Propitation*, or Means of appeaſing the divine Wrath; *(d)* his Obedience is *imputed to us* for Righteouſneſs; *(e) by his Death* we are ſaid to be *reconciled to God*; *(f) by the Sprinkling of his Blood to be ſanctified*; *(g) by the Redemption, that is in him, freely to be juſtified*; and by his *Mediation (h) to receive the Promiſe of an eternal Inheritance.* Thus all Things, that we wanted, has *Chriſt*, by his *meritorious* Performances, obtained to us: And the *Manner* of his doing this was, by becoming our *Repreſentative*, and putting himſelf, though innocent, and pure from all Iniquity, in the Place and Circumſtances of *Sinners*; for, to that Degree *(i) loved he the World, that he gave himſelf for us, an Offering, and a Sacrifice to God of a ſweet ſmelling Savour*; and that Concern had God for Man's Redemption, that *(k) he made him to be Sin* (or the *Expiation* of Sin) *for us, who knew no Sin, that we might be made the Righteouſneſs of God in him.*

This the chief End of his Coming.

THIS indeed was the great *End* and Deſign of his Coming. *(l)* He took upon him our Nature, and was clothed in Fleſh, *partly* indeed, that he might *preach* the Will of God to Mankind, in a nearer, and more condeſcending Converſation with them; but *principally*, that he, who in *the Form of God*, could not ſuffer, might become capable of *ſuffering*, by being *made in the Likeneſs of Man.* He lived a moſt *innocent* and ſpotleſs Life, that he might indeed ſet us an *Example*, that we ſhould *follow his Steps*; but chiefly, becauſe, as it was required that the *typical* Sacrifices under the Law ſhould be *whole*, and *without Blemiſh*, ſo it was neceſſary, that he, who was to be the real *expiatory* Sacrifice for the Sins of others,

in our *Nature:* Nor could the *Recompence* of their Obedience, in any tolerable Methods of Juſtice, be *imputable to us*, as our Recompence, while done in another Nature, which we have no Share in, and to which we have no natural or neceſſary Relation. And if Angels could not ſerve us in this *Capacity*, much leſs could any mortal Man. Take the whole Race of Mankind, and we are all *Sinners* without Exception, and, as Sinners, under the Sentence and Power of Death: Now he, who, as a Sinner, wants an Atonement himſelf, for that Reaſon alone muſt be unfit to make one. He may lay down his Life indeed ſooner, than he would have done, but his Death can be no Ranſom (*i. e.* no *voluntary Gift*) to redeem his Brother, becauſe it is not in his own *Choice*, whether he will *die* or no. Death, the decreed *Wages of Sin*, is due to every one, that is a Sinner; and muſt therefore make his Life incapable of being a *Propitiation* for Sins.—It is the abſolute Righteouſneſs, and perfect Innocence of our bleſſed Saviour, by his entire and compleat Obedience to the whole Law, without any manner of Failure or Defect, that give the firſt *Merit* to his Sufferings for our Sakes, and make his offering up himſelf to Death, a proper *Ranſom* and *Propitiation* for our Sins, as being under no *Neceſſity* of dying upon any other Account. *Turner*'s Ser. at *Boyle*'s Lect.

* Man eſpecially, the moſt righteous, that ever liv'd, cannot do it: For, conſidering that we received our Being, and all that we are, and have, from God, and, upon Account of theſe Benefits, are obliged to love and ſerve him to the utmoſt, what a ſenſeleſs Piece of Arrogance is it, to ſay, that *a Creature can merit any thing at God's Hand?* Whatever we give God is of his own; and when we have done all we can, we have done no more than our Duty; and can any Man challenge any Reward for doing what he ought to do? Can any Man make Satisfaction for a *Fault*, that he hath committed, by doing his Duty, *i. e.* by not committing another? We are *indebted* to God by the Breach of his Law; but we cannot *quit* this Debt, and ſatisfy for this *Breach*, by not breaking it again, becauſe all poſſible Obedience is no more, than what we *owe* to God; not to ſay, that the beſt of our Obedience is *imperfect*, and ſo far from *meriting*, that it ſtands in need of *Pardon.* But now how a Man can *demerit*, and *merit* by the ſame Action, or how he, who deſerves to be *puniſhed* for an Action, becauſe he did it no *better*, can deſerve to be rewarded for the ſame Action, becauſe he did it no *worſe*, we cannot poſſibly imagine. *Tillotſon*'s Ser. Vol. I.

(a) Seed's Ser. Vol. II. *(b)* 1 Pet. i. 18, 19. *(c)* 1 John ii. 2. *(d)* Rom. iv. 24. *(e)* Rom. v. 10. *(f)* 1 Pet. i. 2. *(g)* Rom. iii. 14. *(h)* Heb. ix. 15. *(i)* Eph. v. 2. *(k)* 2 Cor. v. 21. *(l) Clarke*'s Ser. Vol. V.

others, ſhould have none of *his own*, that needed Expiation. He ſuffered a ſhameful and ignominious Death upon the Croſs, that he might, in like manner, give us an Example of *Patience*, and Readineſs to ſuffer; but the main Deſign of it was, that he might *put away Sin by the Sacrifice of himſelf*, and *(a) obtain eternal Redemption for us, through Faith in his Blood.*

And wherein the Merit *of his Sacrifice did conſiſt.*

BUT did the Merit of Chriſt's Sacrifice conſiſt in *his Blood?* Or did the *Shedding* of *that* procure the Remiſſion of our Sins, and all other Benefits of his *Paſſion?* Some Phraſes in Scripture ſeem to denote ſo; and from thence ſome unwary Readers may perhaps be induced to think ſo; but, in Strictneſs of Speech, it was not the *Blood* of *Chriſt*, but his *Obedience*, both *active* and *paſſive*, that was properly the *Sacrifice*, and the acceptable *Offering* unto God. *(b)* God, we know, is a *Spirit*, and ſpiritual Services are chiefly his Delight. *Perfect Innocence*, and *conſummate Virtue*, both in doing and ſuffering, were not only the *Flower* and Perfection, but the very *Form* and *Eſſence* of our Lord's Sacrifice. In that *unfathomable* Myſtery of divine Love, our Lord's dying for us, there was found, not only *ſpotleſs* Holineſs and Purity, but a moſt *upright Heart*, and the moſt devout *Affections*, breathing nothing, but the higheſt Benevolence, and Services for the Glory of God, and the Salvation of Men, for the general Happineſs (if I may ſo ſpeak) of the whole *rational Syſtem:* And theſe benevolent Services, taken together, and all recommended by the *ſuper-eminent* Dignity of the Perſon ſo doing, and ſo ſuffering, were the Sacrifice of a *ſweet Odour*, the ſpiritual *Perfume*, acceptable to him, who alone knew its infinite Worth and Merit.

That he ſaved us likewiſe from the Power *of Sin.*

BUT to make *Atonement for Sin*, was not the only Purpoſe of *Chriſt*'s Coming. The *Reformation* of the World, the *Reparation* of the Image of God in us, the *purifying* our Minds, and *(c) purging our Conſciences from dead Works, to ſerve the living God*; theſe were equally the Deſign of his Incarnation and Death; and therefore, without attempting the Performance of theſe, he would have become but *half* a Saviour unto us; *one*, *(d)* who had redeemed us indeed from his Father's Wrath, and the Puniſhment thereupon enſuing, but left us, in the mean Time, to the *Wickedneſs* and Impurity of our own Nature; *one*, who had delivered us from the Apprehenſions of a *Gibbet*, or an *Executioner*, but could not, or would not cure us of the inward *Sickneſſes*, or *Maladies*, under which we languiſhed. But now, to clear him of all ſuch Imputation, we find his Apoſtles aſſerting, that *(e) for this Purpoſe the Son of God was manifeſted, that he might deſtroy the Works of the Devil:* For this Purpoſe *(f) he died for all, that they, who live, ſhould not live unto themſelves, but unto him, that died for them*; and for this Purpoſe *(g) he gave himſelf for us, that he might redeem us from all Iniquity, and purify unto himſelf a peculiar People, zealous of good Works.*

By his Goſpel.

WHAT then has our gracious Saviour done, in order to reſcue us from the *Dominion* of Sin, as well as from the *Penalty* of it? *(h) The Goſpel of Chriſt* (as the *Apoſtle* tells us) *is the Power of God unto Salvation to every one, that believeth:* *(i)* In it, he hath exactly defin'd the *Bounds* of our Duty, and in his own Life, given us an *Example* of the Practice of it: In it, he hath fully made known unto us the *Heinouſneſs* of Sin, and the Neceſſity of Repentance: In it, he hath ſupplied the Defects of *the Law*, and given us Precepts of a greater Perfection, than the World was acquainted with before: In it, he hath clearly revealed the powerful *Motives* of Religion, and urged them upon Mens Minds in their greateſt Force and Energy: In it, *he hath brought Life and Immortality to Light*, and, by the convinceing Evidence of his own Reſurrection, and Aſcenſion, has prov'd the *Reality* of a future State, *and open'd the Gates of Heaven to all Believers.*

(k) GOOD Men indeed, at all Times, had ſome comfortable *Hopes* of a future State, as the worſt of Men were not without their uneaſy *Apprehenſions* of a *Puniſhment* to come; but then they had diſputed themſelves into ſuch Doubts and Uncertainties about them, that they loſt their proper Influence upon Mens Minds, and wanted that *determinating* Force to Virtue and Godlineſs, which a firm Belief, and full Conviction of theſe Things would have infuſed into them. But now the *Light of the glorious Goſpel of* Chriſt has ſcatter'd all theſe Clouds, and chaſed away that Darkneſs, which

(*a*) Heb. ix. 12. (*b*) *Waterland*'s Ser. Vol. II. (*c*) Heb. ix. 14. (*d*) *Sharpe*'s Ser. Vol. II. (*e*) 1 John iii. 8. (*f*) 2 Cor. v. 15. (*g*) Tit ii. 14. (*h*) Rom. i. 16. (*i*) *Clarke*'s Ser. Vol. V. (*k*) *Tillotſon*'s Ser. Vol. II.

which hid the other World from our Sight, inſomuch that the *Kingdom of Heaven*, with all its Treaſures of Life, and Happineſs, and Glory, to excite our *Hopes*, lies open to our View; and, to awaken our *Fears*, (*a*) *Hell is alſo naked before us, and Deſtruction hath no Covering*. But this is not all.

The Aſſiſtance of his Grace.

It is the great and peculiar *Privilege* of the Goſpel Diſpenſation, that, whereas the *original* Law of God required perfect *unſinning* Obedience, the Covenant of *Mercy*, eſtabliſhed by the Death of Chriſt, has relaxed that *Rigour*, and reduced the Conditions of Salvation, to the gracious Terms of *Faith*, *Repentance*, and a ſincere *Endeavour* to obey the divine Commands, according to the beſt of our Ability. Our Ability indeed is not great: The Corruption of our Nature, and the Weakneſs of our Faculties are ſuch, that *(b) of ourſelves we are not ſufficient to think, or do any Thing, as of ourſelves*, but then we are told at the ſame Time, that our *Sufficiency is of God*; that *(c) greater is he, that is in us, than he, that is in the World*; that *(d) through him, who loved us, we are in all Things more than Conquerors*; and that, in the moſt deſperate Attacks, that can be made upon us, *he will not ſuffer us to be tempted above what we are able, but will with the Temptation alſo make a Way to eſcape, that we maya ble able to bear it*.

And his Interceſſion *for us.*

For now, that he is advanced into Heaven, and *exalted to the Right Hand of the Majeſty on high*, (*e*) to *appear in the Preſence of God for us*, (*f*) *he is able to ſave to the uttermoſt all thoſe, that come unto God by him, ſeeing he ever liveth to make Interceſſion for* us. He once indeed died to purchaſe Salvation for us; and, that we may not fall ſhort of it, but receive the full Benefit of this Purchaſe, *he lives for ever to make Interceſſion for us*, and thus *he ſaves to the uttermoſt all thoſe, that come unto God by him*, i. e. he takes care of the whole Buſineſs of our Salvation *from firſt to laſt:* For, 'tis in virtue of this powerful *Interceſſion* that our Sins are pardon'd upon ſincere Repentance; our Prayers are graciouſly anſwer'd; our Wants are abundantly ſupplied; and the Aſſiſtance of God's Spirit is plentifully afforded us, to excite us to our Duty, to ſtrengthen us in well doing, to ſupport us in Afflictions, and, in all our Trials and Temptations, to *keep us through Grace unto Salvation*.

Thus has our bleſſed Lord, to all Intents and Purpoſes, prov'd himſelf, in *Analogy* to his *Name*, our *Saviour*, and mighty Deliverer, ſince (*g*) the *Guilt* and Pollution of our Iniquities he hath waſhed away (*h*) *in the Fountain, that was opened for Sin and for Uncleanneſs*; the *Puniſhment*, due to them, he hath releaſed, by becoming our *Sacrifice*, and ſuffering in our Stead; the *Anger*, which God had conceived againſt them, he hath appeaſed, by giving full Satisfaction to his Juſtice; and the *Power* and Dominion of them he has ſubdued, by the Doctrine of his Goſpel enlightning our Underſtandings, the Aſſiſtance of his bleſſed Spirit influencing our Minds; and his powerful Interceſſion, for every Thing we want, at the Right Hand of God, 'till he comes to crown us finally with the *Salvation*, which he has purchaſed and provided for us: In all which Inſtances, he has taken effectual Means to redeem us from *Captivity*, and to open unto us a Way, whereby we may *retreat* out of (*i*) *the Bondage of Satan into the glorious Liberty of the Children of God*; and, being (*k*) *made free from Sin, and become the Servants of God, we may have our Fruit unto Holineſs, and our End everlaſting Life*.

(*l*) *FORASMUCH then, as the Children are Partakers of Fleſh and Blood, he alſo himſelf likewiſe took part of the ſame, that, through Death, he might deſtroy him, that had the Power of Death, that is the Devil, and deliver them who through Fear of Death were all their Life-time ſubject unto Bondage*.

In all which he proves himſelf a compleat Saviour.

In ſhort, upon theſe, and ſeveral other Accounts, he is a *perfect and abſolute Saviour*, which cannot be ſaid of any, that have had that *Denomination* among Men. (*m*) They have been *inſtrumental* perhaps, in delivering Perſons or States from ſome Dangers and Calamities, but have not been able to protect and defend them from others of a worſe Nature and Conſequence. Conſult all Hiſtory, and you will find no compleat Deliverer: But ſuch was *Jeſus*. He perfected our Deliverance: He ſhields us from Miſeries of all Kinds; he *ſaves* both our Bodies and our Souls; he beſtows on

(*a*) Job xxvi. 6. (*b*) 2 Cor. iii. 5. (*c*) 1 John iv. 4. (*d*) Rom. viii. 37. (*e*) Heb. ix. 24.
(*f*) Heb. vii. 25. (*g*) *Stanhope*'s Epiſt. and Goſpel, Vol. I. (*h*) Zech. xiii. 1. (*i*) Rom. viii. 21.
(*k*) Rom. vi. 22. (*l*) Heb. ii. 14, 15. (*m*) *Edwards*'s Body of Chriſt. Relig. Vol. I.

on us *temporal* Bleſſings; he much more confers upon us thoſe, that are *ſpiritual*; and, to conſummate and crown our Happineſs, he gives us thoſe, that are *eternal.*

And therefore his Name *ought to be* reverenc'd.

OF ſuch heavenly Importance is this bleſſed Name to us: This *Name, which is above every Name*, and therefore, in Obedience to the Divine Command, worthy to be *ador'd* by every Tongue, and proper to be *reverenced* * by every *Knee* in the whole *intelligent* Creation. This the *Apoſtles*, the *Martyrs*, the *Confeſſors*, the whole Church *militant* here on Earth were always uſed to do of old; and this the *Saints*, and *Angels*, *Principalities*, and *Powers*, and all the Church *triumphant* are inceſſantly doing in Heaven; for ſo they are repreſented, as (*a*) *caſting their Crowns before the Throne*, and ceaſing *not*, *Day and Night*, from (*b*) *ſaying, worthy is the Lamb, that was ſlain, to receive Power, and Riches, and Wiſdom, and Strength, and Honour, and Glory, and Bleſſing:* And therefore *unto him* ſhould much more *we*, who partake of the ineſtimable Benefits of his moſt precious *Blood-ſhedding*, upon every Mention of his Name, pay the *profoundeſt* Veneration, and join with the bleſſed *Choir* above, in (*c*) *ſaying, Bleſſing, and Honour, and Glory, and Power, be unto him, that ſitteth on the Throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever, Amen.*

The OBJECTION.

" BUT if our bleſſed Lord was ſo " *compleat* a Saviour, why was the " *Time* of his Coming ſo long delay'd? " When all the World lay in *Darkneſs*, un- " der the *Power* of Sin, and the *Dominion* " of the Devil, why did not this *Captain of* " *our Salvation* appear ſooner to *ſave* and " reſcue Mankind from their *ſpiritual* " Thraldom? (*d*) If the Love of God, in " ſending his Son into the World, was ſo " great, ſo univerſal, as is pretended, why " were *four Thouſand* Years run out, before " we hear any *Tidings* of him, when the " Caſe of all Men, living in the *interme-* " *diate* Time, was deplorable, and their " Fate, in a manner, deſperate, at the beſt, " *uncertain?* But if his Coming was ſo long " delay'd, the *Salvation*, which he brought " along with him, ſhould have been more " *extenſive*, one would think, and more " *powerful* and efficacious, than we find it " is, when we look over thoſe vaſt *Terri-* " *tories*, that are *Heatheniſh* or *Mahome-* " *tan*, and compare the ſmall Number of " *Chriſtian Profeſſors* with the Multitude " of thoſe (*e*) *to whom the Goſpel is hid,* " *and in whom the God of this World has* " *blinded the Eyes of them, that believe not*; " and, eſpecially, when we look into the " *Lives* of theſe *Profeſſors*, and thereby " perceive, what a ſmall *Reformation* Chri- " ſtianity has made amongſt us; and that, " for the few, (*f*) *that hold the Myſtery of* " *Faith in a pure Conſcience*, and (*g*) *walk* " *worthy of the Vocation, wherein they are* " *called*, there are Thouſands, (*h*) *who re-* " *tain the Truth in Unrighteouſneſs, and,* " *being* (*i*) *entangled in the Snare of the* " *Devil, are taken captive by him at his* " *Will.* And is this the *Might* of our great

* " *Bowing the Knee to the Name of* Jeſus (according to Biſhop *Andrews*) was by all ancient *Writers* upon " the Text of *Phil.* ii. 9, 10. (but by him, meaning *Origen*, who turn'd all into *Allegories*) conſtantly under- " ſtood in a *literal* Senſe." Ser. on the Reſurrection. In this Manner St. *Ambroſe* expounds it, when, ſpeaking of the ſeveral Parts of the human Body, he makes *bowing at the Name of* Jeſus the proper Uſe and Duty of the *Knee*, Lib. 6. Ch. 9. In this Senſe our firſt *Reformers* certainly took it, for ſo it appears by their enjoining that, *whenſoever the Name of* Jeſus *ſhall be pronounced, in any Leſſon, Sermon, or otherwiſe in the Church, due Reverence ſhould be made by all Perſons, young and old, with Lowneſs of Curteſy, and uncovering of the Heads of Mankind, as thereunto does neceſſarily belong, and heretofore has been accuſtomed,* Injunctions of Queen *Elizabeth* in the Year 1559. Angels in Heaven indeed, which *are the Things above*, and the Spirits in Hell, which are *the Things beneath*, have no *Knees*, wherewith to *bow*, and thereby ſhew their Obeiſance; but there is no Doubt to be made, (ſince they acknowledge a *Subjection* to Chriſt's Sceptre and Dominion) but that they have ſome *peculiar* Way of expreſſing it, and of yielding a proper Reverence even to his Name, that is agreeable to their reſpective Natures. But admitted this were not exactly the Duty of the Text, yet it certainly *is a good Foundation for the Wiſdom of the Church to require it of all Chriſtian People, to the End, that, by thoſe outward Ceremonies and Geſtures, their inward Humility, Chriſtian Reſolution, and due Acknowledgment, that the Lord* Jeſus Chriſt, *the true and eternal Son of God, is the only* Saviour *of the World, in whom all the Graces, Mercies, and Promiſes of God to Mankind, for this Life, and the Life to come, are fully and wholly comprehended,* as our Church has declared, Can. 18. An. 1603. *Heylyn* on the Creed.

(*a*) Rev. iv. 10. (*b*) Rev. v. 12. (*c*) Rev. v. 13. (*d*) *Bradford*'s Ser. at *Boyle*'s Lect. (*e*) 2 Cor. iv. 3 4. (*f*) 1 Tim. iii. 9. (*g*) Eph. iv. 1. (*h*) Rom. i. 18. (*i*) 2 Tim. ii. 26.

" Deliverer? this the *Reſult* of all, that " he hath done for us? When we ſee, he " cannot ſave us from the Pains and Ago- " nies of a *temporal* Death, and that, not- " withſtanding all their vain Boaſts of *Im-* " *mortality*, *Chriſtians* die in common with " other Men, what Hopes can we have of " his Interpoſition between us and *eternal* " Miſery, and of ſaving our Souls in the " Day of Wrath? Inſtead of truſting then " to *this Staff of a bruiſed Reed*, our ſafeſt " Way will be to depend upon ourſelves, " upon our own *intrinſick* Worth, and *right* " Behaviour, which is the beſt Foundation " of our Acceptance with God; or, if we " have been *defective* in this Reſpect, to " betake ourſelves to the Work of a true " and ſincere *Repentance*, which God is too " gracious to diſregard, even tho' it has no " other *Atonement*, nor any *Interceſſion* to " recommend it. And indeed, the Notion " of Salvation, by the Merit and Obedi- " ence of another, is quite an *Antinomian* " Principle, and utterly *ſubverſive* of the " Neceſſity of *good Works*. It intirely va- " cates the Doctrine of *free Grace* in the " Remiſſion of our Sins: For, if a full " Compenſation was made for them, we " are acquitted at once; if our Sins made " us *Debtors* to God's Juſtice, and Chriſt, " who was our *Surety*, has diſcharg'd this " Debt, and ſatisfied God, we ſeem to " have no farther Concern upon our Hands, " but only by *Faith* to lay hold on his *Me-* " *rits*, and the *Propitiation*, which he hath " made, and thereby obtain an *Imputation* " of his Righteouſneſs to us: For, if (*a*) " *there is now no Condemnation to thoſe, that* " *are in Chriſt Jeſus*, there can be no Fear of " Puniſhment, live we how we will. Accord- " ing to the (*b*) Articles of our own Church, " (*c*) *we are juſtified by Faith freely, with-* " *out our own Works, or Deſervings*; and " therefore, tho' (*d*) *our Righteouſneſs be* " *as filthy Rags*, and (*e*) *our Tranſgreſſions* " *multiplied before us*, yet (*f*) *who ſhall lay* " *any Thing to the Charge of God's Elect?* " *It is God that juſtifieth: Who is he, that* " *condemneth? It is Chriſt, that died, yea* " *rather that is riſen again, who is even the* " *Right Hand of God, who alſo maketh In-* " *terceſſion for us.*"

Anſwered by ſhewing, that God had all along *made* Proviſion *for Men's Salvation.*

ST. *PAUL*, meaning to declare the *Univerſality of the Redemption, that is in Chriſt Jeſus*, tells us, that (*g*) *him had God ſet forth, or* pre-ordain'd *to be a Propitiation through Faith in his Blood for the Remiſſion of Sins, that are paſs'd*; for which Reaſon St. *John* calls him (*h*) *the Lamb, that was ſlain from the Foundation of the World*, and *fore-ordaind*, ſays St. *Peter*, (*i*) *before the World began, tho' manifeſted in theſe laſt Days.* So that, according to the Opinion of theſe *three* great Apoſtles, there was a *Decree* or Pre-ordination in the Divine Counſels, long before the *Fall* of Man, that he ſhould be raiſed and reſtored again, and that the Efficacy of Chriſt's Undertaking for that Purpoſe ſhould extend to all the Generations of Mankind, and look *backward* to the Beginning of the World, as well as *forward* to the End of it; in which Senſe he is ſaid (*k*) *to be a Propitiation for our Sins, and not for our Sins only, but alſo for the Sins of the whole World.* Now if God, in his great Mercy to Mankind, had, from the very firſt, made ſuch *Proviſion* for their Salvation, tho' *four thouſand* Years had elapſed, before he ſent his Son in our *Fleſh*; yet we cannot ſay, that he had *neglected* them all that Time, ſince, in Virtue of his Son's *meritorious* Performances, which, at a proper Seaſon, were to take Place, he ſufficiently declar'd, that, upon his Account, he would be (*l*) *no Reſpecter of Perſons, but that, in every Nation, he that feared God, and work-ed Righteouſneſs, was accepted with him.*

Which accordingly had effect.

WE allow indeed, that *Faith*, as well as *Righteouſneſs*, is made the *Condition* of our Salvation; but then, if by Faith we are to underſtand an *expreſs believing in* Jeſus Chriſt, it muſt be reſtrain'd to thoſe only, who have had the Revelation of his Goſpel; for, as for others, (*m*) *how ſhould they believe in him, of whom they have not heard? And how ſhould they hear without a Preacher?* The *Patriarchs* of old, from the very firſt Promiſe (*n*) made to *Eve*, had a *Tradition*, that, at a proper Time, the *Meſſiah* ſhould be born, and, it was by Faith in him *to come*, that they were ſaved, even as we muſt be, by Faith in him, that is *already come*; for which Reaſon, the Account which the Apoſtle gives of theſe *ancient Worthies* is—that (*o*) *they died in Faith, not having received the Promiſes, but, having ſeen them afar off, were perſuaded of them, and embraced them:* And with Relation to other Nations, it is worthy our Obſervation, that

(*a*) Rom. viii. 1. (*b*) Art. XI. (*c*) Rom. v. 1. (*d*) Iſa. lxiv. 6. (*e*) Iſa. lix. 12. (*f*) Rom. viii. 33, 34. (*g*) Rom. iii. 24, 25. (*h*) Rev. xiii. 8. (*i*) 1 Pet. i. 20. (*k*) 1 John ii. 2. (*l*) Acts xxxiv. 35. (*m*) Rom. x. 14. (*n*) Gen. iii. 15. (*o*) Heb. xi. 13.

that the Apoſtle to the *Hebrews* has given us a more *general* Definition of Faith, by telling us, that it is *a* (*a*) *believing, that God is, and that he is a Rewarder of them that diligently ſeek him*; whereby he ſeems to intimate, that God will accept of ſuch a *Degree* of Faith in him, as is ſuitable to the *Revelation*, he hath made of himſelf, be it more or leſs. (*b*) What elſe can we think of *Job*, (for Inſtance) (*c*) *a perfect and upright Man, one that feared God, and eſchewed Evil*, and yet he was an *Arabian*? Or what of *Abimelech*, who had the Teſtimony of God himſelf, that he was a Man (*d*) *of Integrity of Heart*, and yet he was a *Philiſtine*? And, tho' I dare not profeſs myſelf aſſur'd of the State of *Socrates* and *Epictetus*, yet I cannot but be ſtrongly inclined to hope, that the *Expiation* of our Redeemer may have rendered their Obedience, in Proportion to their Knowledge, in a good Degree, acceptable to God.

That he did not therefore neglect them.

IF God then, even *before* the Fall of *Adam*, had determined to ſend his Son into the World, in order to redeem Mankind, and, in his Wiſdom, had ſo concerted the Matter, that his meritorious Deeds and Sufferings for that End ſhould have a *Retroſpect* to all Ages paſt, from the very *Beginning* of the World, as well as an *Influence* upon all, that are to come, until its *final Period*: If, in virtue of a Faith in a Saviour *to come*, the *Patriarchs* of old, and ſuch as liv'd under the *Jewiſh* Diſpenſation, ſerved God acceptably; and even thoſe, who had no *explicit* Revelation of this Matter, were graciouſly connived at, and met with kind *Allowances* for their Failings: If all this was done, I ſay, in the *intermediate* Time before Chriſt's Coming, the Time of his Coming we ought, in all Modeſty, to leave to the Determination of God, who alone knew which was the *fitteſt*. This only we may obſerve, that, (*e*) had it been a thouſand, or two thouſand Years ſooner, thoſe, who now complain of his coming *too late*, would have made it an Objection againſt the *Credibility* of his Religion, that he came *too ſoon*, *viz.* that the Goſpel, which he publiſhed, was uſhered into the World in a dark and *fabulous* Age, and too *long* ago to be believ'd: But now, by his coming in an *Age*, the moſt remarkable that ever was, for all Kinds of *Knowledge* and Politeneſs; when the *Expectation* of him was univerſal, and the *Prophecies* concerning his Coming all fulfilled, he has not only put to Silence all Cavils of this Kind, but made choice of the very Seaſon, and *Centre* of Time, when the *former* Ages were not ſo *remote*, but that they might partake of the Benefits of his Death and Paſſion; and the *laſt* Ages of the World can have no Pretence to call in Queſtion the *Truth* of the Chriſtian Religion, upon account of the long Diſtance of Time ſince the Life and Death of its great *Founder*.

But ſent his Son into the World at the fitteſt Time.

The wonderful Propagation *of the Goſpel* at firſt.

AFTER the Death of its Founder, the *Propagation* of the Chriſtian Religion * was very miraculous. In the Book of the *Apoſtles Acts*, we read of its ſpreading, in a very few Years, *forwards*, through many *Eaſtern* Countries, and *backwards*, through a great Part of the *Weſt*; on one Side, into all the *civiliz'd*, and ſome of the *barbarous* Provinces of *Aſia*, and on the other, as far the great *Metropolis* of *Europe*, *Rome* itſelf, (*g*) ſo

(*a*) Heb. xi. 6. (*b*) *Bradford*'s Ser. at *Boyle*'s Lect. (*c*) Job i. 1. (*d*) Gen. xx. 6. (*e*) *Jenkins*'s Reaſon. of the Chriſt. Rel. Vol II. (*f*) *Atterbury*'s Ser. Vol. I.

* *Hugo Grotius*, in his little Book concerning the Truth of the Chriſtian Religion, has repreſented the Matter thus: —— "It was agreeable to divine Providence to cauſe *that*, which is beſt, to be ſpread the "fartheſt, and this has happened to the Chriſtian Religion, which, we ourſelves ſee, is taught all over *Europe*, "even the fartheſt Corners of the *North* not exempted; throughout all *Aſia*, even in the Iſlands of the Sea "belonging to it; through *Egypt* alſo, and *Ethiopia*, as well as ſome other Parts of *Africa*; and laſtly, "through *America*. Nor is this done *now* only, but was ſo of *old*, as the Hiſtory of all Ages, the *Books* of Chriſ- "tians, and the *Acts* of *Synods* do teſtify. Among the *Barbarians*, even to this Day, there is a Tradition pre- "ſerved of the Journeys, and Miracles of St. *Thomas*, *Andrew*, and other Apoſtles. *Clemens*, *Tertullian*, and "other Writers, have obſerv'd how far the Name of Chriſt was famous, in their Times, among the *Britons*, "*Germans*, and other diſtant Nations; ſo that we may juſtly ſay, what Religion is there, that can compare "with it for the Extent of its Poſſeſſion? If you anſwer, *Heatheniſm*: That indeed has but one *Name*, but "is not *one* Religion: For its *Votaries* do not all worſhip the ſame Thing, ſince ſome worſhip the *Stars*, "others the *Elements*, others *Beaſts*, and other Things, that have no Exiſtence; neither are they governed "by the ſame *Law*, nor under one common *Maſter*. The *Jews* indeed, though very much ſcattered, are "but one *Nation*: But then their Religion has receiv'd no remarkable *Increaſe* ſince *Chriſt*; nay, their own "*Law* is more made known, and farther extended by Chriſtians, than it is by themſelves. *Mahometiſm* in- "deed is ſettled in many Countries, but not *alone*; for the Chriſtian Religion is profeſs'd, in thoſe very "Countries, by very great Numbers; whereas, on the contrary, there are no *Mahometans* to be found, in "many Parts, where the *Chriſtian* Religion is eſtabliſh'd. Book II.

(*g*) Acts xix. 20.

ſo mightily grew the Word of God, and prevailed! Such indeed was the *Fidelity* and Induſtry of the Apoſtles, and their immediate *Succeſſors*, and ſo conformable were their Lives to the excellent Doctrines, which they preached, that, within the Space of about three hundred Years, *Chriſtianity* became the *eſtabliſh'd* Religion of the *Roman* Empire. (*a*) For a *Century* after that, and upwards, the Number of Chriſtians multiplied excedingly in all Parts of the World, where it had already been *planted*, and as far as the Dominion of the *Romans*, and their Influence did extend; and, (*b*) had the Chriſtians, of the Ages following, continued to recommend their *Profeſſion* by the *Exemplarineſs* of their Lives, and to follow the *Zeal* of their Predeceſſors in the Propagation of it, long before this Time, it would have been the *univerſal* Religion of Mankind; and that it is not ſo now, this proceeds not from any Defect in the *Proviſion*, which God had made for that Purpoſe, but from the *Fault* of thoſe, to whom he had committed ſo great a *Truſt*.

How it came to be retarded.

In Truth, (*c*) the Honours and Endowments, which *religious* Princes beſtowed on the *Church*, corrupted the *Morals* of it, and very often occaſioned *Ambition* and *Luxury* in thoſe, that contended for them, or poſſeſſed them, inſomuch that the Name of Chriſtianity ceaſed to be *venerable* in the Eyes of Men; and then was the Time, that *Mahomet* took the Opportunity to ſet up his Religion, which, being ſuited to the voluptuous *Manners* of the *Eaſt*, and ſeconded by the *Power* of the Sword, made large Inroads into *Chriſtendom*, and tore away whole *Provinces* at once from the Profeſſion of the Goſpel; ſo that, (*d*) *the Hedges of this Vineyard of God being broken down, all they, that went by, plucked off her Grapes: The wild Boar of the Wood did root it up, and the wild Beaſt out of the Field did devour it.*

Why it is withholden from ſome Nations.

The *imperfect* Propagation of the Goſpel, and the Prevalence of *Mahometiſm* over it are ſome of the *dark Secrets* of Divine Providence, tho' the *Vices* and Diſorders of Chriſtians, in thoſe Days, did plainly contribute towards them. And, in like manner, the *with-holding* the Light of the Chriſtian Religion from ſeveral *Heathen* Nations, tho' finally reſolvable into the divine Will and Pleaſure, may, nevertheleſs, have ſome *latent* Reaſons, that not improbably have occaſion'd it. This is certain, (*e*) that the *Divine Providence* did, all along, direct the firſt Preachers of the Goſpel, where to publiſh it; that (*f*) *they were forbidden by the Holy Ghoſt to preach the Word in* Aſia; that, *when they aſſayed to go into* Bythinia, *the Spirit ſuffer'd them not*; that St. *Paul*, by an *extraordinary Viſion*, had a particular Call to go into *Macedonia*, and, by *another*, (*g*) was excited to preach in *Corinth for a Year and ſix Months together*, even becauſe *the Lord had much People in that City*. The *Inſtructions*, which our bleſſed Lord gave to his Apoſtles, when he ſent them out upon the ſame *Errand*, run in this Strain — (*h*) *Whoſoever ſhall not receive you, nor hear your Words, when ye depart out of that Houſe or City, ſhake off the Duſt of your Feet, for a Teſtimony againſt them*, that they had an Offer of the Goſpel, but did reject it; and his *Commination* to the Church of *Epheſus*, for *leaving her firſt Love*, is delivered in theſe Words —— (*i*) *Remember from whence thou art fallen, and repent, or elſe I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy Candleſtick out of its Place, except thou repent:* So that, from theſe ſeveral Paſſages put together, it ſeems not unevident, that the *hidden* Cauſe, why God continues ſo many Nations under a *Deſtitution* of the Goſpel, may be either, that, when they had an Opportunity of having it reveal'd to them, they obſtinately rejected it; or, when it was ſettled among them, their wicked and unworthy Behaviour provoked God to remove it; or that, in ſome Countries, the People were degenerated into ſuch *Brutes*, had ſo extinguiſh'd the Light of *Nature*, and ſo defac'd the Dictates of *Conſcience*, that they were * not qualified

(*a*) *Atterbury*'s Ser. Vol. I. (*b*) *Bradford*'s Ser. at *Boyle*'s Lect. (*c*) *Atterbury*'s Ser. Vol. I. (*d*) Pſal. lxxx. 12, 13. (*e*) *Bradford*'s Ser. (*f*) Acts xvi 6, &c. (*g*) Acts xviii. 10, 11. (*h*) Mark vi. 11. (*i*) Rev. ii. 4, 5.

* The only *Nation*, which could pretend to any Degree of *Politeneſs*, at the Time of the firſt Propagation of the Goſpel, and which had it not preached unto them, where the *Chineſe*. But how much ſoever the Learning of theſe People has been extolled, 'tis plain, that it was very *mean*; and (what is worſt of all) that they had no Notion of a *ſupreme Being*: For *Father Martini*, who was a long while in the Country, and well underſtood their Language, aſſures us, "That there was not a Name in the *Chineſe* Tongue, that would expreſs "the *loweſt Idea*, which the moſt barbarous Nations had of a God." And therefore if any People were diſqualified for receiving ſo excellent an Inſtitution, as the *Chriſtian*, the *Chineſe* muſt be of that Number, ſince they were ignorant of *that*, which is *preſuppoſed* in every Revelation, *the Being of a God*. *Gurdon*'s Ser. at *Boyle*'s Lect.

qualified to receive it, and therefore a Tender of it would have ſerv'd to no other Purpoſe, but only to aggravate their *Condemnation*.

But at one Time or other will become more univerſal.

THAT thoſe, who, in this preſent Life, have lived, and died without hearing of the Goſpel, ſhall, after our Saviour's *Return*, and before the *final Period* of the World, be *raiſed* again, have the Goſpel preached to them, and ſo be put upon a *new State* of Trial, is the Opinion of *(a)* ſome learned Men: But, however this be, that Chriſt, before the Conſummation of all Things, will effect a glorious *Reformation* among Mankind, and enlarge the *Bounds* of his Dominion here on Earth; that he will diſplay the *Banner* of his *Croſs*, and *ſummon* all Nations to repair unto it, who, accordingly, will obey the *Signal*, the Scripture in many Places, ſeems to be expreſs: But, at what Time this Event ſhall happen, we have no Intimation given us, only we may venture to foretel, that, (*b*) when Chriſtian *Princes* ſhall become as *zealous* to promote the Religion of our Lord, as to extend their *Empire*; when *Subjects* of all Nations ſhall be as *induſtrious* to advance Chriſtian *Knowledge* in Foreign Parts, as to enlarge their *Trade* and *Commerce*; (*c*) when the *Converſations* of thoſe, that name the Name of Chriſt, ſhall be anſwerable to the Purity of his Doctrine; when the *Diviſions* of *Chriſtendom* ſhall be heal'd, and the Profeſſors of our holy Religion live together every where, like Men *of one Mind, in one Houſe*; then ſhall the *Sceptre* of Chriſt's Kingdom extend itſelf to all the unconverted Parts of the Earth, and not ſooner. *(d)* Mean while, it will better become us, to *adore*, than *cenſure* the *ſecret* Counſels of divine Providence, to enjoy and improve, with Thankfulneſs, the Advantages, that are vouchſafed us, and to remember, that they, who want them, have no *Account* to give for them; that every peculiar *Privilege*, we enjoy, has a peculiar Duty to be ſet in the Scale againſt it; and that *(e) to whomſoever much is given, of him ſhall be much required*, which brings the Matter to a proportionable *Equality*.

Chriſtianity fitted for the Amendment *of Mankind.*

(f) WHAT Advantage then hath the Chriſtian? Or *what Profit is there in our* Baptiſm? *Much every Way; but chiefly becauſe unto us are committed the Oracles of God*, which require an univerſal *Righteouſneſs* both to God and Man; found that Righteouſneſs upon the *Principles* of Love and Charity, which can never fail; urge the moſt effectual *Motives* to a willing Obedience; afford the greateſt *Helps* and *Aſſiſtances* to an holy Life; and crown that *Holineſs* with *(g) an exceeding and eternal Weight of Glory*; ſo that, if ever there was a Religion, calculated for the *Reformation* of Mankind, it muſt be the *Chriſtian*. And indeed, if we look round the World, *(h)* where, but in this *Profeſſion*, do we find any true *Devotion*, excluſive of *Superſtition*, and *idolatrous* Ceremonies? Where, any Acts of real *Charity*, ſuch as cloathing the *Naked*, and feeding the *Hungry*, and building *Hoſpitals* for the Poor? Where, Perſons of the higheſt Rank condeſcending to the loweſt Acts of *Humility*, *Kings* and *Emperors*, with their own Hands feeding the Needy, and *Queens* and *Empreſſes* adminiſtring to the Sick? In what other Inſtitution, I ſay, can we find ſuch a generous *Contempt* of the World, as to undervalue Riches and Honours, amidſt an *Affluence* of them? Where, ſuch *Abſtinence* and *Moderation* in the moſt lawful Enjoyments; where, ſuch *Patience* and *Perſeverance* under the moſt ſevere Trials; where, ſuch *Zeal* and Fervour, ſuch earneſt *Contention* for Victory over Sin, and ardent *Aſpirations* after Heaven and Happineſs, as was univerſally remark'd among Chriſtians in the *primitive* Times?

And, accordingly, has had a good Effect *ever ſince.*

NAY, in thoſe Times, not only the Profeſſors of Chriſtianity, but even ſuch, as reject it, received ſeveral *Advantages* from the Force and Influence of its Doctrine. *(i)* Their *Oracles* ceaſed; their *Idols* were deſtroyed; and the *Oblation* of *human* Sacrifices (which was accompanied with many cruel and impure Rites) was every where intermitted. *Morality* was taught by their *Philoſophers* in much greater Perfection, than ever it was before. The *Vices*, which made up ſo great a Part of their ſacred *Myſteries*, appeared too abominable, to paſs any longer for Religion; and their *idolatrous* Worſhip became ſuch a Reproach to them, that they ſought out all Arts to *refine* and *excuſe* it, being aſhamed at the *Compariſon*, when they ſaw Chriſtianity (wherever it prevail'd) eſtabliſhing a Worſhip ſuitable to the pure and

(*a*) Vide *Burnet*'s Theory, and *Staynoe* of Salvation by Chriſt alone. (*b*) *Bradford*'s Ser. at *Boyle*'s Lect. (*c*) *Atterbury*'s Ser. Vol. I. (*d*) *Marſhall*'s Ser. Vol. I. (*e*) Luke xii. 43. (*f*) Rom. iii. 1, 2. (*g*) 2 Cor. iv. 17. (*h*) *Nichols*'s Conference, Vol. I. (*i*) *Jenkins*'s Reaſonableneſs, Vol. I.

ſpiritual Nature of God; a Worſhip of the *Heart*, conſiſting of Prayers and Praiſes, and Thankſgivings to him, who is the *Author* of our Being, under whoſe daily *Protection* we live, and from whoſe never-failing *Bounty* we receive all the good Things, that we enjoy.

IT cannot be denied indeed, but that the *Zeal* of thoſe Times is gone off, and the *Influence* of our holy Religion ſtrangely abated, inſomuch, that we find groſs *Exceſſes* and Irregularities not uncommonly committed amongſt us. But ſtill, we may appeal to thoſe, who make this Objection, (*a*) whether theſe Exceſſes would not become more *general*, and more *flagrant*, if the *Reſtraints* of our Religion were removed; whether the Commiſſion of them is not far leſs *frequent*, and attended with more *Caution* and *Shame*, than among *Heathens*; and whether the *Scandal* and Enormity of them be not, in ſome meaſure, balanced, by the extraordinary Degrees of Piety, Purity, and *Exactneſs* of Life and Manners, which Multitudes of its Profeſſors exhibit. We may appeal to them, whether, in thoſe Countries, where Chriſtianity is profeſs'd with any tolerable *Purity*, the *Generality* of the *meaner*, and moſt vulgar, and ignorant People, has not truer and worthier *Notions* of God, more juſt and right *Apprehenſions* of his Attributes and Perfections, a deeper *Senſe* of the Difference of Good and Evil, a greater *Regard* to *moral* Obligations, and a more firm and univerſal *Expectation* of a future State of Rewards and Puniſhments, (*b*) than, in a *Pagan* Country, any conſiderable Number of Men, at this Time, are known to have.

How Death temporal came to be introduc'd.

SOME of the *wiſeſt* and moſt intelligent of them may perhaps entertain a Notion, that the *Soul* will ſurvive the Death of the Body; but that the *Body* ſhall again be formed out of the Duſt of the Earth; that the Grave ſhall be forced to *give up its Dead*, and a compleat Victory obtained over the *Prince of Terrors*, by the Power of a *general Reſurrection*; this they could have no Conception of: And yet it is a known and received Doctrine among us, that, (*c*) *as in* Adam *all die*, (all become ſubject to Mortality) *ſo in Chriſt ſhall all be made alive.*

OUR *original* Condition indeed ſeems to have been framed for Bliſs and *Immortality*. Death was no Part of the *firſt Creation*, but (*d*) (as the Apoſtle obſerves) was afterwards *introduc'd by Sin*: For, when our firſt Parents had violated the divine Command, the Puniſhment, that was threaten'd thereupon, immediately took Place, and ſunk both themſelves, and all their Poſterity, at once, into ſuch a *Condition*, that their *Bodies* became liable to *Decay* and *Diſſolution*, which is *temporal* Death, and their *Souls* to *Miſery* and *Deſtruction*, which is *eternal.*

Why permitted to continue.

THIS temporal Death indeed is ſtill permitted to *paſs upon all*, as a *Monument* of God's Diſpleaſure againſt Sin, a neceſſary *Means* of abbreviating the Pains and Afflictions of this Life, and a wiſe *Expedient* to tranſlate us to the great and endleſs Felicities of another. But, as ſoon as this grim *Meſſenger* has done his Office, we retire into our Graves, which, from *Seats* of Rottenneſs and Deſpair, our Saviour has changed and conſecrated into *Chambers* of Reſt and Hope; where, after we have taken a ſhort *Repoſe*, our Bodies ſhall be awakened into Life again, and, being inveſted with *new* Powers and Improvements, ſhall be ſo united to our Souls, as never to ſuffer a *ſecond Separation.*

And how *our Saviour delivers us from it.*

(*e*) THE Apoſtle, to ſhew us more diſtinctly the glorious *Acceſſions*, which will accrue to our Bodies at their Reſurrection, expreſſes them by five oppoſite Qualities. (*f*) Our Bodies at preſent, ſays he, are *weak* and *diſhonourable* and *animal*, and *corruptible*, and *mortal: Weak*, by reaſon of the *jarring* Principles of their Compoſition; *diſhonourable*, by Reaſon of the many *noiſome* Effects, that theſe Principles produce; *animal*, becauſe their *Life* depends (as that of Beaſts does) upon the Return of an uncertain Breath; *corruptible*, becauſe they tend every Day towards Diſſolution; and *mortal*, becauſe, at laſt, they terminate in actual Death. But, on the contrary, ſays he, thoſe Bodies, that ſhall be, are *vigorous*, and *glorious*, and *ſpiritual*, and *incorruptible*, and *immortal*; *vigorous*, without any Weakneſs or Impediment; *glorious*, without any Darkneſs or Deformity; *ſpiritual*, without any Groſſneſs or Incumbrance; *incorruptible*, without any Pain or Paſſability; and *immortal*, without any Alteration or Decay. Thus ſhall our bleſſed Saviour make us a full Amends for

(*a*) The Biſhop of *London*'s 2d Paſtoral Letter. or the Biſhop of *London*'s 2d Letter, Page 33, &c. (*b*) Vide *Millar*'s Propagation of Chriſtianity, Chap. 7. Ser. Vol. I. (*c*) 1 Cor. xv. 22. (*d*) Rom. v. 12. (*e*) Young's (*f*) 1 Cor. xv.

for the Damage, we ſuſtain'd in being liable to *temporal* Death, when, at the Reſurrection, *(a) he ſhall change our vile Bodies, that they may be faſhioned like unto his glorious Body, according to the Working, whereby he is able even to ſubdue all Things to himſelf.* Let us now ſee, in the next Place, what he has done farther for us, in order to deliver us from *eternal* Death.

How *from Death eternal.*

(*b*) Now to this Purpoſe we muſt obſerve, that he has not only taken an *effectual* Way to free us from the *Guilt* and *Dominion* of Sin, whereof this Death is the Conſequence and Puniſhment, but that, if we comply with the *Terms* of his Goſpel, he will acquit us publickly at the great Day of *Judgment*, and then, in purſuance to the Sentence of our *Abſolution*, will actually inſtate us in *his Kingdom of Glory*, where (*c*) *we ſhall ſerve him Day and Night, and he, that ſitteth on the Throne, ſhall dwell among us; where we ſhall hunger no more, nor thirſt any more, neither ſhall the Sun light on us, nor any Heat; but the Lamb, which is in the midſt of the Throne, ſhall feed us, and ſhall lead us unto living Fountains, and God ſhall wipe away all Tears from our Eyes.* An ample *Reparation* this, for all the bad Uſage, that we can poſſibly meet with here, for, *(d) I reckon*, ſays St. *Paul, that the Sufferings of this preſent Time are not worthy to be compared with the Glory, which ſhall be revealed in us.*

To the *Jew*, the *Turk*, the *Pagan*, Afflictions may be *grievous*, and Death *the Prince of Terrors*; but to us, it is no *Abſurdity* to *(e) rejoice in Tribulations*, who know that *the light Affliction, which is but for a Moment, worketh out for us a far more exceeding and eternal Weight of Glory:* To us, no *Violence* upon Reaſon and Nature, to deſire *(f) to be diſſolved*, ſince thus we ſhall *be with Chriſt, which is far better*; not even to triumph in our departing *Agonies*, ſince we know that *(g) our Redemption* then *draweth nigh:* To us, laſtly, no Hardſhip, to be put upon conquering Death by dying in our own Perſons, ſince we have it to ſay, *(h) Thanks be to God, that has given us the Victory, through our Lord* Jeſus Chriſt.

That there is no ſuch Thing as Merit *in Man.*

BUT is not our *perſonal* Merit, and *right* Behaviour capable of procuring us this Confidence towards God, a Title to his Favour, and a Participation of the Glory *that ſhall then be revealed?* The Author of the Book of *Job*, to ſhew the Meanneſs of Man, and what ſmall Grounds he has to think of meriting any Thing at the Hand of his Creator, founds his Argument upon the divine Holineſs, *(i) God charges his Angels with Folly*, ſays he, *the Stars are not pure in his Sight, what then is Man, that he ſhould be clean?* Man, *that is born of a Woman, and is a Worm, that he ſhould be righteous? (k)* It is not however ſo great an Abaſement to Man, that *(l) Corruption is his Father, and the Worm his Mother and Siſter*, as that Sin is his *Offspring*. His *Make* is common, but his *Depravation* is wholly ſingular. He is indeed the only *Rebel* in Nature, and ſtands diſtinguiſh'd from the reſt of the Creation, not ſo much by his *Reaſon*, as his *Guilt*. How then ſhall a Creature, polluted with Sin, approach the Preſence of his offended God? Not certainly in the arrogant Strain of the ſelf-commending *Phariſee, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other Men are*, but in the humble Guiſe of the ſelf-condemning *Publican, God be merciful to me a Sinner*. For, whoever conſiders the Number, the Nature, and the Aggravation of his Offences, will find Reaſon enough with the Royal *Pſalmiſt* to pray, (*m*) *Enter not into Judgment with thy Servant, O Lord, for in thy Sight ſhall no Man living be juſtified.*.

Eſpecially of everlaſting Bliſs.

(*n*) *WHERE is the Boaſting then? it is excluded. By what Law? of Works; nay, but by the Law of Faith.* For, (*o*) is there a Man, who can lay his Hand upon his Heart, after having faithfully examined it, and declare, that whatever Frailties he may have, yet he has ſtrove, to the beſt of his Power, in every Stage of Life, to ſubdue each inordinate Paſſion, to diſcharge every Duty, and to cultivate each virtuous Habit? Let him ſtand forth at the laſt *deciſive* Day, and put in his Claim to ſuch a *Degree* of Happineſs, as will be proportioned to his *Deſerts*, but as for the Happineſs, which is the promiſed Reward of the Goſpel, an Happineſs exquiſite in its *Degree*, unallayed in its *Nature*, and everlaſting in its *Duration*, ſuch *(p) as Eye hath not ſeen, nor Ear heard, neither hath it enter'd into the Heart of Man to conceive*; this he could never have had any Groundsto expect, unleſs the Merits of our Saviour had enſured it to him.

Nor is Repentance *alone an* Expiation *for Sin.*

NAY, not only the *Prize* of our high Calling, but even the *Pardon* and Forgiveneſs

(*a*) Phil. iii. 21. (*b*) *Clarke's* Ser. Vol V. (*c*) Rev. vii. 15, &c. (*d*) Rom. viii. 18. (*e*) 2 Cor. iv. 17. (*f*) Phil. i. 23. (*g*) Luke xxi. 28. (*h*) 1 Cor. xv. 53. (*i*) Job iv. 18, xv. 14, xxv, 6. (*k*) *Young's* Ser. Vol. I. (*l*) Job xvii. 14. (*m*) Pſal. cxliii. 2. (*n*) Rom. iii. 27. (*o*) *Seed's* Ser. Vol. II. (*p*) 1 Cor. ii. 9.

neſs of our Sins are for ever to be deſpair'd of, without the Merit and Mediation of our Saviour: For 'tis in his Name, alone that (*a*) *Repentance* and *Remiſſion of Sins* are commanded to *be preached*; and, when at any Time we offend, 'tis not by our own *Contrition*, that the *Atonement* is made, but by the *Blood*, which he has ſhed for our Expiation. Repentance indeed, in this Caſe, is the beſt Thing, that we can do, and all, that is in our Power: (*b*) But then if this our *All* be too little to appeaſe the *Anger* of an offended God, to vindicate the *Honour* of his Attributes, the Holineſs and *Juſtice* of his Government, and to anſwer the *End* and Purpoſes of his ſacred and eternal Laws, it only ſhews us our *Miſery*, but can afford us no *Conſolation*: It declares us to be *Criminals* ſtill, tho' more *humble* and contrite, than we were before; and whatever Change may be made for the better in the *inward* Temper of our Mind, we are, nevertheleſs, in a State of Sin, under the Guilt, and liable to the Puniſhment of it, and thus muſt continue, *Veſſels of Wrath*, and *fitted for Deſtruction*, had we not a *Saviour* to atone for, and a *Redeemer* to deliver us.

HAD *Repentance* been ſufficient to *ſatisfy* the divine Juſtice, and to *procure* the Remiſſion of *Sin*, without any farther *Expiation*, why was it not available in the Caſe of *Adam*'s Tranſgreſſion? His *Tranſgreſſion* was no *blacker*, than thoſe of other Men; nor was his *Repentance*, in all Probability, leſs *pungent*; and yet we find that it was of no Efficacy to appeaſe the divine Wrath, or to avert the deſtin'd Puniſhment: And how then can we think, that Grief, and Sorrow, and Self-condemnation, ſuppoſe it never ſo intenſe, ſhould be an *Amulet* againſt all the voluntary, repeated, and malicious Tranſgreſſions of Men, obſtinately and profanely wicked? View the *Criminal* at the Bar, will his Grief, his Contrition, his Remorſe, his Sighs, and Prayers, and Tears, his bemoaning himſelf, and making many bitter Lamentations, either expiate his Guilt, or exempt him from Puniſhment? The Proceedings of all Courts of *Judicature* ſhew the contrary: And how then can it be imagin'd, that what is not of Weight to ſatify the Juſtice and Authority of *human* Laws, ſhould be ſufficient to turn aſide the Indignation of a *tremendous* God, and to compenſate for the Violation of his moſt ſacred Precepts and Commands.

That Chriſt's Merits do not authorize Sin in us.

IT is of ſingular Comfort to us therefore, that God has provided himſelf with a *Propitiation*, and that, when our Obedience and Repentance are defective, (as they always muſt be) there the *Merits* of our all-ſufficient Saviour come in to our Relief. But do we therefore *cancel* all Obligations to *moral* Righteouſneſs, and *make void the Law through Faith?* (*c*) (as the *Apoſtle* expreſſes it) *God forbid*; *yea, we eſtabliſh the Law.* How much ſoever our bleſſed Lord has done for us, yet he will never make himſelf an *unrighteous* Saviour for our Sakes. He did not give himſelf for us, that he might indulge us in Sin, but (*d*) *that he might redeem us from all Iniquity, and purify to himſelf a peculiar People, zealous of good Works.* The Chriſtian *Covenant* is ſo far from giving us a *Licence* to do Evil, that it enjoins us (*e*) *to abſtain from* the very *Appearance of it*; that it lays a Reſtraint upon our Tongues, our Eyes, our Thoughts, and Imaginations; checks our Paſſions, moderates our Deſires, and regulates our Enjoyments; makes *ſincere* Juſtice and *univerſal* Charity, Heavenly-mindedneſs and *voluntary* Inflictions, a Contempt of the World, and chuſing to die, rather than do any *moral* Evil, the *neceſſary* Parts of our Duty: And, leſt any one ſhould be induced to think otherwiſe, the *Apoſtle*, having reckon'd up a *Catalogue* of contrary Vices, gives us this Caution; *(f) Let no Man deceive you with vain Words, for becauſe of theſe Things cometh the Wrath of God upon the Children of Diſobedience; be not ye therefore Partakers with them.*

Nor deſtroy the Freedom of God's Grace.

THE *Antinomians*, who deny the *Neceſſity* of good Works, (*g*) conſider Sins purely as *civil Debts*, and the *Satiſfaction* of Chriſt, as a full and adequate *Payment* of thoſe Debts, and, conſequently, as a full *Diſcharge* at once both of Sin, and Sinners, upon the ſingle Condition of *Faith* in Chriſt. But now the right Doctrine is,—that God, in this Caſe, muſt be conſidered, not merely as a *Creditor*, but as a *Lawgiver*, a *moral* Governor and Judge of Men; that Sins againſt him are not properly *Debts*, but *Crimes*, with perſonal Guilt, and directly obnoxious to divine Puniſhment; and that *Chriſt*, in ſatisfying for theſe

(*a*) Luke xxix. 49. (*b*) *Turner*'s Ser. at *Boyle*'s Lect. (*c*) Rom. iii. 13. (*d*) Tit. ii. 14. (*e*) Theſſ. v. 22. (*f*) Eph. v. 6, 7. (*g*) *Chapman*'s Euſebius, Vol. II.

theſe Crimes, does not *ſuperſede* all our Obedience, does not *diſcharge* us of all our Obligations, but only makes ſome *Amends* for our many Faults and Offences, and thus prevails, through the Mercy of God, for our *Reſtoration* to the Favour and Bliſs, we had forfeited, in Caſe we comply with the *Conditions* of the Goſpel. Under this View God has not received, either from us, or from our *Redeemer*, ſuch a *Balance*, and equivalent Recompence, as can make our *Releaſement* from Sin a *Debt* unto us, but only ſuch an *Expiation*, and ſuch a Satisfaction to his Juſtice, as make the free Exerciſe of his Grace, in the Remiſſion of it, ſuitable to his Honour and Attributes, and conſequently without Blemiſh and without Reproach: (*a*) So that here the Pardon is *free*, the Deliverance an Act of *Grace*, and the Reconciliation *gratuitous*, to which God the Father was originally mov'd and inclined, of his own eſſential *Goodneſs*, genuine *Compaſſion*, and that tender *Commiſeration*, which to the divine Nature is inſeparable.

Juſtification *by Faith what, according to St.* Paul's Doctrine.

ST. *PAUL*, in ſeveral of his Writings, but more eſpecially in his Epiſtles to the *Romans* and *Galatians*, gives great Encomiums of *Grace*, and *Faith*, as the Means and * Inſtruments of our *Juſtification*. For, (*b*) *ſince all have ſinned, and come ſhort of the Glory of God*, ſays he, *therefore we conclude, that Man is juſtified freely by his Grace, through Faith in the Redemption, that is in Jeſus Chriſt*; and to know † the Deſign of the Apoſtle in theſe, and the like Expreſſions, we muſt obſerve, that, (*c*) at this Time, there were *Gentiles*, in great Numbers, who, being brought up under the Inſtitution of their *Philoſophers*, and valuing themſelves upon their *exalted Virtues*, (for ſo their Pride perſwaded them) and thinking the *Religion of Nature* ſufficiently perfect, conceived, that they had no need of *Chriſt*, and ſo would not embrace the Goſpel. There were alſo Multitudes

(*a*) *Turner*'s Ser. at *Boyle*'s Lect.

* I am ſenſible, that ſome very eminent Men have expreſſed a *Diſlike* of the Phraſe of the *Inſtrumentality of Faith*, and have alſo juſtly rejected the *Thing*, according to the falſe Notion, which ſome have conceived of it. It cannot, with any tolerable Senſe or Propriety, be looked upon as an Inſtrument of *Conveyance* in the Hand of the *efficient* or *principal* Cauſe; but it may juſtly and properly be look'd upon as the Inſtrument of *Reception*, in the Hand of the *Recipient*. It is not the *Mean*, by which the Grace is *wrought*, effected, or conferr'd; but it may be, and is, the *Mean*, by which it is *accepted*, and *received*; or (to expreſs it a little differently) it is not the *Inſtrument* of Juſtification in the *active* Senſe of the Word, but it is in the *paſſive* Senſe of it. *Waterland*'s Summary View.

(*b*) Rom. iii. 23. (*c*) *Waterland*'s Ser. Vol. I.

† In order to this, it may be very proper to obſerve, in what Senſe the Words *Juſtification*, *Faith*, *and Works* are uſed by the Apoſtle in theſe Epiſtles. Now, 1ſt, the Word *juſtify*, according to its moſt *uſual* Signification in Scripture, is to receive one to Mercy and Favour, by not *imputing* to him his former Tranſgreſſions; and therefore God's *Juſtification* of any, is his forgiving him his Treſpaſſes, abſolving him from Guilt, diſcharging him from *Puniſhment*, and accepting, eſteeming, and rewarding him as if he were a *righteous* Perſon, altho', in Reality, he be no ſuch Thing. Now, taking the Word in this Senſe, there is properly a twofold *Juſtification*. The *firſt* is, when we take upon us the Profeſſion of the Chriſtian Religion in *Baptiſm*; for then our paſt Sins are forgiven us, and we received into a *Covenant of Grace* and Pardon. But this is not a full *Juſtification*, becauſe our Sins may be *afterwards* imputed to us, in caſe we ſhould, either in *Profeſſion*, or *Works*, *deny* the Faith, which we then took upon us. Our *ſecond* therefore, and our compleat Juſtification is not 'till the *great Day* of Judgment, when God will for ever acquit from the Guilt, and free from the Puniſhment of their paſt Tranſgreſſions, all thoſe, who continued faithful to that *Covenant*, which they entered into with him at their *Baptiſm*. 2dly, The Word *Faith* ſtands generally in the New Teſtament for the whole *Complex* of Chriſtianity, in oppoſition to the *Law*, which is put for the whole *Jewiſh* Diſpenſation. So that *Faith*, in this Senſe, is equivalent to the *Goſpel* of Chriſt, becauſe Chriſtianity is a *fœderal* Religion, founded, on *God's Part*, on Promiſes, that he has made to us, and on the Rules, that he hath ſet us, and, on *our Part*, on our believing that *Revelation*, our *truſting* to thoſe Promiſes, and our *following* thoſe Rules. But beſides this, Faith ſignifies ſometimes (as it does in St. *James*) a *bare Aſſent* of the Mind to the Truth of the Doctrines reveal'd in Scripture, without any *Conformity* of our Lives thereunto; in which Senſe it is ſaid *to be dead, being alone*, and will prove of no more Advantage to us, then it is to the *Devils*, *who believe, and tremble*, James ii. 17, 19. At other Times however (as it is in St. *Paul*'s Writings) it is put, for the *Cauſe* and the *Effect* both, and therefore denotes, not only a *mere Belief* of the Goſpel Truths, but likewiſe a *Life* led anſwerable to ſuch a Belief, for which Reaſon the Apoſtle is known to call it the *Law of Faith*, and the *Obedience of Faith*, Rom. i. 5. and iii. 27. 3dly, The Word *Works* ſignifieth ſometimes (as it does in St. *James*) a ſincere *Obedience* to the Laws of the Goſpel, which demonſtrates itſelf in the Offices of Piety, Juſtice, and Charity, and all other *moral* Duties, to which we are obliged, either as *Men*, or *Chriſtians*; and, at other Times it denotes (as it does in St. *Paul*) either the *Ritual* Obſervances of the Law, or the *Merit* of our good Deeds, or ſuch *Actions*, as might be done by *unregenerate Men*, living in a State of Nature, and without the *Grace* and Aſſiſtances of the Goſpel. Theſe *Diſtinctions*, carefully obſerv'd, will enable us to reconcile St *Paul* and St. *James*, and to underſtand the Doctrine of our Church concerning the Article of *Juſtification*. *Burnet* on the Articles, and *Blackhall*'s Ser. on James ii. 24.

titudes of *Jews* (*Phariſees* eſpecially) who were even prouder, in this Point, than the *Gentiles*, and ſtrongly conceited of their ſpiritual Improvements and Privileges, as if they had no Sin, nor had any need of Pardon. Now againſt both theſe Kinds of Men the Apoſtle diſputed with great Strength and Clearneſs, in order to *beat down* their Vanity, and convince them of the abſolute Neceſſity of looking out for ſome better *Righteouſneſs*, than their own; a Righteouſneſs, which reſts in the meritorious Atonement made by *Chriſt Jeſus*, and which is to be *receiv'd by Faith*, i. e. by a *ſubmiſſive* and humble Acknowledgment of their own *Inſufficiency* to Salvation, and by *repoſing* their whole Truſt and Confidence in the Goſpel Covenant of *Grace*: For (*a*) *Faith*, in this Senſe, is a kind of *ſilent* Prayer ſent up to the divine Majeſty, beſeeching him to admit us, not for any Pretenſions of our own, not for our own Services, (which at the beſt are too weak, and imperfect, to abide his ſtrict Scrutiny) but out of his own free Grace and Mercy, and for the Sake of his beloved Son, who, by his all-prevailing Atonement, has *merited this* for every ſincere and penitent Offender, that he ſhall be treated as if he were perfectly *righteous*, and recompenced accordingly: For, (*b*) *being juſtified by Faith*, ſays the Apoſtle, *we have Peace with God, through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, by whom alſo we have Acceſs by Faith into his Grace, wherein we ſtand, and rejoice in the Hope of the Glory of God.*

And the Articles *of our Church.*

THIS is the Senſe of our Church in the Article of *Juſtification*; and her diſavowing our *own Works and Deſervings* is therefore thought more *neceſſary*, becauſe (*c*) there are ſome amongſt us, who pretend to *Merit*, and *Super-errogation*; ſome, that claim Acceptance with God, without a *Propitiation* for their Sins; ſome, that aſcribe ſo much to *Free-will*, as to vacate the Neceſſity of *Grace*; and ſome, that conceive ſo highly of *natural Religion*, as to deſpiſe the *Revelation* of the Goſpel, and the *Righteouſneſs*, which it exhibits: And therefore good Reaſon had ſhe for rejecting *our own Works*, becauſe, ſtrive we what we will, we are ſtill *unprofitable Servants*, and *eternal Life* muſt for ever be *the Gift of God in Chriſt Jeſus*; becauſe no Services of ours *did*, or ever *can* deſerve it; becauſe, if ever we had any Title to it, we have all of us *forfeited* it by manifold Inſtances of Diſobedience; becauſe we are reſtored to the joyful Hope of it, through the *Merits*, and Mediation of the Son of God; and becauſe the Whole of his Undertaking was *free Grace* and Bounty; we had no *Claims* upon him, and contributed nothing to the Price, which he paid for our Redemption.

The Neceſſity of good Works notwithſtanding.

IT is to be obſerv'd however of the Writings of St. *Paul*, and in thoſe very Epiſtles, where he ſeems to magnify *Faith*, and to depreciate the *Merit* of good Works moſt, he, nevertheleſs, warmly inſiſts upon the Neceſſity of *moral* Righteouſneſs: For when he tells us, that (*e*) *God will render unto every one according to his Works*; *that* (*f*) *not the Hearers, but the Doers of the Law, ſhall be juſtified*; that (*g*) *we, who are dead to Sin, ſhould not live any longer therein*; that (*h*) *we ſhou'd not ſin, becauſe we are not under the Law, but under Grace*; and that (*i*) *our old Man is crucified with Chriſt, that the Body of Sin might be deſtroyed*; we can never ſuppoſe, that his Purpoſe is to diſcard all Virtue and Godlineſs, and to ſet up *Faith*, as the ſole Principle of our *Juſtification*. He tells us indeed, that there *is no Condemnation to them, that are in Jeſus*, but then, leſt we ſhou'd miſtake his Meaning, and think, that a bare Belief will put us in that happy Condition, he imdiately adds, (*k*) *Who walk not after the Fleſh, but after the Spirit*. He makes it a Part of the Chriſtian Triumph, *Who then ſhall lay any Thing to the Charge of God's Elect?* But then, leſt any one ſhou'd think himſelf in a State of *Indefectability*, and therefore licenced to live *wickedly*, he enters a *Caveat* in another Place, (*l*) *Be not deceived, God is not mocked*; *for whatſoever a Man ſoweth, that ſhall he alſo reap*; *he that ſoweth to the Fleſh, ſhall of the Fleſh reap Corruption.*

If we promiſe ourſelves any Benefit *from* Jeſus.

WHATEVER Advantages therefore ſome Men may promiſe themſelves from the comfortable Name of *Jeſus*, yet, (*m*) if the *Laſcivious* perſiſts in his Lewdneſs, the *Drunkard* in his Riot, the *Covetous* in his Avarice, the *Revengeful* in his Malice, the *Proud* in his Vanity, and the *Profuſe* in his Extravagance; to be ſhort, if Men continue

(*a*) *Waterland's* Ser. Vol. II. (*b*) Rom. v. 1, 2. (*c*) *Waterland's* Ser. Vol. II. (*d*) *Marſhall's* Ser. Vol. III. (*e*) Rom. ii. 6. (*f*) Rom. ii. 13. (*g*) Rom. vi. 2. (*h*) Rom. vi. 15. (*i*) Rom. vi. 6. (*k*) Rom. viii. 1. 6. (*l*) Gal. vi. 7, 8. (*m*) *Stanhope's* Ep. and Goſp. Vol. III.

nue in Sins unrepented of; if they *love* and like the Fault, how much ſoever they may *dread*, and abhor the Puniſhment; to every ſuch Man our bleſſed Lord is no *Jeſus* at all, nor does any one of the innumerable Benefits, implied in that *endearing* Word, belong to him. But to the penitent *Sinner*, to the devout *Worſhipper*, to the juſt and honeſt *Dealer*, to the bountiful *Alms-giver*, to the *ſober* and the *pure*, to the *meek* and the *peaceable*, to the *humble* and the *mortified* Chriſtian, to the *diligent Worker out* of his own, and the *zealous Promoter* of other Mens Salvation, the Safety and Defence, the Support and Joy of a *Jeſus* is inconceivable; becauſe they are ſenſible, that *Temptations* cannot hurt, where he *ſhields*; nor *Sins* condemn, where he *pardons*; nor *Adverſity* oppreſs, where he *ſuſtains*; nor *Death*, or Devils drive to deſpair, where he, who is the *Reſurrection and the Life*, hath given the *Pledges* of his Love, and the *Earneſt* of everlaſting Life.

DISSERTATION VI.

The Harmony *of the Divine Attributes in Man's* SALVATION.

Salvation *of Sinners, wherein it conſiſts.*

(*a*) SALVATION, in the general Notion of it, is a *Deliverance* from any great and imminent *Danger*, eſpecially ſuch a Deliverance, as is not effected without *Labour* and Hazard; and, as it relates to what our Saviour has done for us, it is a Deliverance from the *Guilt* and *Dominion* of Sin here, and from that heavy *Deſtruction*, which, by the juſt Judgment of God, muſt, at laſt, overtake all the Workers of Wickedneſs hereafter. When therefore Men had ſo far *corrupted their Ways*, as to provoke the Indignation of God, and ſo became liable to this ſad Deſtruction, the moſt natural and obvious Way for inflicting it, was, to puniſh the Offenders *themſelves*, thereby to deter them from ſuch Provocations another Time, or, in deſtroying them quite, to diſcourage others, by their exemplary Puniſhment, from incurring the like Offences.

Its no Contrariety *to the divine Attributes.*

BUT, becauſe God hates not the *Perſon* of Sinners, and has no Pleaſure in their Deſtruction, but only, as a juſt *Governor* of the World, a neceſſary *Concern* for the Honour of his Laws; here began the *Conflict* between his *divine Attributes* and Perfections. (*b*) If his infinite *Mercy* were inclinable to ſave, his *Holineſs*, *Juſtice*, and *Truth* ſtepp'd in to prevent it, and check'd the *forward* Inclinations of his *Goodneſs*:

" For is not Sin contrary to the holy Nature
" of God? Has not he declared his infinite
" Hatred, and Abhorrence of it? Has he
" not threaten'd it with heavy and dreadful
" Puniſhments? And ſhall he now, without
" any *Satisfaction* to his offended Juſtice,
" without any *Vindication* of his Honour,
" without any *Reparation* made for the Con-
" tempt of his Authority, and the Violation
" of his Laws, *pardon* the Sinner, *remit* his
" Puniſhment, and *receive* him into Favour?
" Would this be agreeable to his Holineſs,
" his Juſtice, and Truth? Would this be-
" come the wiſe Governor of the World,
" who loves *Righteouſneſs*, and hates *Iniquity*,
" and, by the *eſſential Rectitude* of his Na-
" ture, is obliged to *diſcountenance* Sin?

HERE then is the grand * *Contraſt*. The

(*a*) *Clarke's* Ser. Vol. IV. (*b*) *Tillotſon's* Ser. Vol. III.

* *Cameracenſis* (Lib. 3.) has a Conceit, which may help, in ſome meaſure, to illuſtrate this Matter.
" When God firſt created *Adam*, ſays he, he gave him all excellent Endowments, viz. *Truth* to inſtruct
" him, *Juſtice* to direct him, *Mercy* to preſerve him, and *Peace* to delight him: But, when he was fallen
" from his Maker, and had forgot all the good, which God had done for him, *they* returned back to
" him, that gave them, making a Report of what had happened on Earth, and each moving the *Almighty*,
" but with different Purpoſes, concerning this unhappy Creature. *Juſtice* pleaded for his Condemnation,
" and called for the Puniſhment which he had deſerv'd; *Truth* preſs'd for the Execution of what God had
" threaten'd to his Diſobedience; but then *Mercy* intreated for poor miſerable Man, made out of the Duſt of
" the Earth, ſeduc'd by Satan, and beguiled under fair Pretences; and *Peace* endeavoured to take off the
" Edge of God's Diſpleaſure, and reconcile the Creature to the Creator. When God had heard the *different*
" Pleas of theſe excellent *Orators*, there was a Council called of the bleſſed Trinity, in which it was finally
" reſolv'd, that the *Word ſhould be made Fleſh*, and aſſume the Nature of Man, that he might partake of his

" *Infir-*

The *Mercy* of God pities our Miſery, and wou'd recover us: It wou'd *open Paradiſe* to us; but there is a *flaming Sword*, that keeps us out, the incens'd *Juſtice* of God, that muſt be ſatisfied. If he takes Vengeance of us, we are eternally ruin'd; if he ſpares us, how ſhall he reconcile the Matter ſo, as to expreſs, at once, his *Love* to the Sinner, and his *Hatred* to the Sin? Here is the Difficulty of our Caſe: But now, our bleſſed Lord, by his Obedience and Sufferings on our Behalf, has ſufficiently vindicated the *Honour* and *Authority* of God; and, by eſtabliſhing a *Covenant of Grace*, upon the Merit of his Obedience and Sufferings, has ſecur'd, to all true *Penitents*, Pardon and Remiſſion of Sins, as likewiſe an *Inheritance with the Saints in Light*; and all this, conſiſtent with every divine Character and Prerogative.

Which are reconciled by Chriſt's ſuffering in our ſtead.

THE *Wiſdom* and *Juſtice* of God requir'd, that, when Man had ſinned, the *Sacredneſs* and *Authority* of the divine Laws ſhou'd be aſſerted by a condign *Puniſhment*; and our Saviour (a Perſon of inconceivable Dignity and Merit) by ſuffering in our ſtead, has effectually *vindicated* that Authority. The *Mercy* and *Goodneſs* of God requir'd, that thoſe, who truly repent and amend, ſhou'd obtain Pardon and Forgiveneſs; and our Saviour, by eſtabliſhing a new *Covenant*, has ſecur'd this Grace and Favour to us, without *intrenching* upon the Honour of the divine Laws. As *Governor* of the Univerſe, God cou'd not ſuffer his Majeſty to be inſulted with Impunity; but, as the *Creator* of Mankind, he cou'd not look upon his own *Offspring* without Compaſſion. As the *Sovereign* of all the World, he cou'd not but *reſent* our Rebellion againſt him; but as the *Father* of our *Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, he cou'd not but accept of his Son's *Mediation* for us. Had God, out of his infinite Grace and Bounty, freely vouchſafed a Pardon to all paſt Wickedneſs, without exacting any Manner of *Satisfaction*, we muſt have admir'd the *Exuberance* of his Mercy, but his *Severity* and Indignation againſt Sin had not ſo clearly been diſplay'd: But now, when, at the ſame Time, that he is pardoning the Sinner, he inflicts the heavieſt Puniſhment of Sin upon the beſt and moſt innocent Perſon, that ever liv'd in the World, voluntarily chuſing to undergo this Puniſhment for us; this is a pregnant Proof, of what tender Concern, his juſt and righteous Laws, and of what unſpeakable Deteſtation, our Iniquities muſt be to him, when he was ſo ſevere and unrelenting to his own *beloved Son*, ſuſtaining the Perſon of Sinners indeed, but who *himſelf had no Sin*.

Wherein are diſcovered more particularly God's Wiſdom.

(*a*) WE juſtly admire the *Wiſdom* of God in the wonderful Fabrick of the World; in his making the *heavenly Bodies* of ſuch a *Bigneſs*, placing them at ſuch a *Diſtance*, and giving them ſuch determinate *Motions*, that they might communicate to us, in a due Proportion, Heat and Light, and other Influences; and in furniſhing the *Earth*, whereon we live, with Plants, and Animals, and other innumerable Conveniences, for Uſe, for Ornament, and for Delight: But now, if we would look a little into the Work of Man's Salvation by the Death and Sufferings of our Saviour Chriſt, we could not but diſcover the ſame *Traces* of infinite Wiſdom, in God's forming a *Scheme*, whereby he might make his Approaches to *guilty* Man, and put him in a Capacity of being *righteous*, without any Imputation upon his *Holineſs*, or any Diminution of his ſupreme *Majeſty*; whereby he might negotiate a *Reconciliation* with his *rebellious* Subjects, by the *Interceſſion* of his Son, and yet receive a full Compenſation for his offended *Juſtice*; whereby he might ſhew himſelf tender, and gracious, and full of Compaſſion to his afflicted *Creatures*, lying proſtrate at his Feet; and yet exert, to the uttermoſt, the Honour of his *ſacred* Attributes, and the inviolable Authority of his moſt *righteous* Laws; (*b*) whereby he might bring Heaven and Earth, as it were, together, by appointing his Son to take our *Humanity* into God, and therein to offer an Atonement, which could not but be ſufficient and effectual to ſatisfy for the Sins of the whole World, ſince the *Sacrifice*, the *Sacrificer*, and the Deity appeaſed were all one;

" *Infirmities*, be ſubject to the *Puniſhment*, which Man deſerv'd, and ſo become a *Propitiation* for the Sins of " the World. By this Means the Deſires of all Parties were fully ſatisfied: For Man was puniſhed as *Juſtice* " demanded; the Puniſhment threatened to Man's Diſobedience, inflicted, as *Truth* requir'd; the Offender " pitied and relieved, as *Mercy* intreated; and God was reconciled to Man as *Peace* had deſired; and ſo that " was fulfill'd, which the Pſalmiſt ſpeaks of, *Mercy and Truth are met together, Righteouſneſs* (or Juſtice) *and* " *Peace have kiſſed each other*, Pſ. lxxxv. 10.

(*a*) *Clark*'s Ser. Vol. I. (*b*) *Stanhope*'s Ep. and Goſp. Vol. I.

one; and whereby he might enable human Nature to gain a compleat Conqueſt over the great Enemy of Souls, and, by the Death and Reſurrection of our common Repreſentative, (a) *deſtroy him who had the Power of Death, and deliver them, who, through Fear of Death, were, all their Life-time, ſubject unto Bondage.* Theſe are ſome of the Inſtances of the *infinite Wiſdom* of God in the *Scheme* of our Salvation: And no leſs is the *Manifeſtation* of his *Almighty Power.*

His Power. *THE inviſible Things of God*, ſays the Apoſtle, (b) *from the Creation of the World are clearly ſeen, being underſtood by the Things, that are made, even his eternal Power, and Godhead*; and yet, were there any Operation laborious to *Omnipotence*, or more or leſs of Pains, where all Things are equally eaſy, we might ſay, that it was much more difficult for God to appear in the Form of *Weakneſs*, than to exert the utmoſt *Activity* and Strength; to make *himſelf of no Reputation*, and to be *found in the Faſhion of a Man*, than to glorify his *Power* by making the whole World in an Inſtant out of Nothing; to become *obedient to the Death of the Croſs*, and made liable to the Malice of his Enemies, than to *blaſt all*, that hate him, with the *Breath of his Diſpleaſure*, and, in a Moment, to command the whole Creation into *Non-exiſtence*. (c) That God ſhould *exert* himſelf beyond all Meaſure, beyond all Imagination, is what our common Conceptions of him are apt to ſuggeſt; but that he ſhould *empty*, as it were, and go out of himſelf, by aſſuming human Nature; that he, whom all Angels worſhip, ſhould vouchſafe to be made *lower* than the loweſt of theſe *miniſtring Spirits*; and for our Sakes, and for our Salvation (as the Prophet deſcribes his Degradation) *(d) become a Worm, and no Man, a very Scorn of Men, and the Outcaſt of the People:* In a word, that the *immortal* and *impaſſable Creator* ſhould take upon him the Paſſions, and Frailties, the Sufferings, and Mortality, of his own *Creature*; this is ſomething ſo exceedingly foreign to the Declarations he hath uſually made of his Power, that it croſſes all our common Apprehenſions of him; tho' it gives us at the ſame Time, a fair *Image* of the divine Goodneſs; for *(e) in this is manifeſted the Love of God towards us, becauſe that he ſent his only-begotten Son into the World, that we might live through him.*

His Goodneſs. *(f)* IT was indeed the Effect of *infinite Goodneſs*, that the World was made in ſuch wonderful Beauty and Order; but how much of the Beauty, intended by this Creation, had been loſt, if, when Sin had brought in *Mortality* and Miſery, one of its *chief* Inhabitants, for whoſe Comfort and Convenience ſo many Parts of it were deſign'd, had been left to periſh; been left to find the *State*, wherein he was placed, a *diſmal Scene* of Anxiety and Sorrow for the preſent, and a *forlorn* Paſſage into certain, endleſs, and much more intolerable Miſeries hereafter. It was, in like manner, a *diſtinguiſhing* Mark of the divine Favour, that we ſhould, at firſt, be created in the *Likeneſs* of God; but what Proportion is there between *this*, and reſtoring to us that Likeneſs, when unhappily loſt, by ſuch an amazing Kindneſs, as that of God's being made *in the Likeneſs of Man*; by putting on our *Paſſions* and *Frailties*, that we might riſe to his *Perfections*; ſubjecting himſelf to our *Neceſſities* and Wants, that we might receive of his *Fulneſs*; promoting us to *Honour*, by ſuffering *Indignities*; and opening to us a Way to *Happineſs*, and *Life*, and a *Kingdom everlaſting*, by a Life of *Afflictions*, a Death of exquiſite *Torture*, and the voluntary *Scandal* of an ignominious *Croſs?* And all this for *Creatures*, who, as ſuch, could add nothing to their Creator's Honour; for *Sinners*, who, as ſuch, had done their utmoſt to diſhonour him; and for *Traitors* and *Rebels*, who being falſe to all their Obligations of Duty, deſerved the hotteſt of his wrathful Indignation. In ſhort, whoever has attained to any tolerable Senſe, *for whom*, and eſpecially *by whom*, this Miracle of divine Mercy was wrought, will look upon it, as a *Myſtery* of Love, for which the *Tongues of Men and Angels* are inſufficient, as a *Subject* reſerved for our future *Contemplation*, and what will make no ſmall *Ingredient* of that happy State, to which it was intended to promote us.

And his Juſtice, *with the* Reaſons *thereof.* *JUSTICE*, however, is an Attribute as *eſſential* to the divine Nature as *Mercy*; and therefore it was not to be diſregarded in this *Diſpenſation* of Grace. *(g)* God, no doubt,

(a) Heb. ii 14, 15. (b) Rom. i. 20. (c) *Stanhope's* Ep. and Goſp. Vol. I. (d) Pſal. xxii. 6.
(e) 1 John iv. 9. (f) *Stanhope's* Ep. and Goſp. Vol. I. (g) *Clarke's* Ser. Vol. II.

doubt, by his ſupreme *Dominion* and Authority, could have forgiven Offences committed againſt himſelf, *freely*, and without any Satisfaction, if he had ſo pleaſed. Every *Prince* upon Earth, every *Superior* whatever, every *private* offended Perſon, has that Power, if he thinks proper to exerciſe it. But God, in his great Wiſdom, did not think fit to do ſo, becauſe of the bad Example it might give, and the ill Conſequences, that might follow. (*a*) How far the State of this World may affect other *intelligent* Beings, in ſome other Parts of the Creation; how it may countenance a *Revolt*, or give them *diſadvantageous* Ideas of their ſupreme Law-giver, if a *whole World* of Sinners, how long, how often, how greatly ſoever they had offended, might be admitted to pardon, without any Sufferings, either *perſonal* or *vicarious*, we cannot tell. They might imagine perhaps, that, what could be ſo eaſily forgiven, was not ſo very *offenſive* to their Creator, nor would be deſtructive to themſeves. But to obviate theſe ill Impreſſions, and to ſhew his *tremendous* Severity againſt Sin, (*b*) *he ſent his own Son* (ſays the Apoſtle) *in the Likeneſs of ſinful Fleſh, that by Sin* (or a Sacrifice for Sin) *he might condemn Sin*, or become the great and ſtanding Condemnation of Sin for ever: Hereby doing (*c*) *Juſtice to his Honour*, in not remitting the *Penalty* denounced againſt Sin, without a full Satisfaction made for all the Offences committed againſt him; *Juſtice to his Holineſs*, in refuſing to accept any *Satisfaction* of leſs Value, than the Blood and Sufferings of his own bleſſed, and eternal Son; *Juſtice to the Authority of his Laws*, in ſhewing, how dearly all wilful Offenders muſt expect to pay for the Violation of them, ſince he ſpared not the moſt upright Perſon that ever was, when he condeſcended to ſtand in the Place of Sinners; and, laſtly, *Juſtice* to the great Author and Promoter of all Sin and Injuſtice, that is the Devil, in ſending him a *Combatant* veſted in the Nature, which he had ſupplanted before, fairly to *grapple* with him for Victory, and, in the *ſecond Adam*, to recover for us, what we had unhappily loſt in the *firſt*.

The Benefits *of the ſecond Covenant.*

AFTER the Offence of our firſt Parent, by (*d*) *which Judgment came upon all Men unto Condemnation*, it was a very great Grace and Favour in God to enter into a *new Covenant* with us, in order to reverſe that Condemnation: For (*e*) what can be greater, than to deliver us from the Dominion of *Death*, the Powers of *Hell*, and the Tyranny of the *Devil*, and to bring us again into *Friendſhip*, and *Communion* with God, and even a *Participation* of his divine Nature? What can be greater, than, when we were the Slaves of Sin, and *Children of Wrath*, to give us the *Adoption* of Sons, and to make us the Children of God, and *Heirs of the Kingdom of Heaven?* Of *Heaven*, where our *Redemption* will be compleat, and our *Salvation* perfect, when we ſhall be removed from hence into a triumphant State of *Immortality*, there to reign for ever (*f*) *with the Spirits of juſt Men made perfect, with* Jeſus *the Mediator of* this *new Covenant, and with the general Aſſembly, and Church of the Firſt-born, which are written in Heaven.*

THESE are *Benefits*, and *Privileges* of the *Covenant*, which our Saviour has ſtipulated for us: But then the *Conditions*, annexed to it, do equally manifeſt the Regard, that God has to Virtue and Righteouſneſs. For therein it is *indented*, that, if we mean to attain the rich *Promiſes* of it, we muſt believe in Chriſt, that (*g*) *he is the Author of eternal Salvation unto all them that obey*; we muſt repent (*h*) *and turn from our Tranſgreſſions, that our Iniquity may not be our Ruin*; and we muſt learn (*i*) *to perfect Holineſs in the Fear of God*, that we may become (*k*) *meet to be Partakers of the Inheritance of the Saints in Light:* Always remembring, that our bleſſed Saviour came into the World, not to make our Repentance *needleſs*, but to make it *valid* and *effectual*, and inſtead of *relaxing* our Obligations to *Obedience*, to tie them more cloſely upon us, by the *Bands* of Gratitude, which can never fail, and the *Cords* of an invincible Endearment.

The Conditions.

(*l*) *AS I live, ſaith the Lord, I have no Pleaſure in the Death of the Wicked, but that he ſhould turn from his Way, and live*; and therefore, to ſhew the *Univerſality* of his Benevolence, he maketh the Offer of Salvation to all Mankind, excluding

His univerſality

(*a*) *Seed*'s Ser. Vol. II. (*b*) Rom. viii. 3. (*c*) *Stanhope*'s Epiſt. and Goſp. Vol. I. (*d*) Rom. v. 18.
(*e*) *Turner*'s Ser. at *Boyle*'s Lect. (*f*) Heb. xii. 23, 24. (*g*) Heb v. 9. (*h*) Ezek. xviii. 30.
(*i*) 2 Cor. vii. 1. (*k*) Col. i. 12. (*l*) Ezek. xxxiii. 1.

ding none from the gracious Invitation. (a) *Ho! every one that thirſteth, come ye to the Waters, and he, that hath no Money, come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come buy Wine, and Milk, without Money, and without Price:* For (b) the *Grace of God*, ſaith the Apoſtle, *which bringeth Salvation, hath appeared unto all Men*, and therefore (c) *the Spirit, and the Bride ſay, come, and let him, that heareth, ſay, come, and let him, that is a-thirſt, come, and whoſoever will, let him take of the Water of Life.* Here then is the vaſt extenſive Goodneſs of God, that (d) *he hath ſent his Son into the World*, not that a *few* particular Perſons, but *that the World*, if they would hearken to him, *might be ſaved.* (e) A whole World *ſaved*,—a whole World redeemed from *Miſery*,—a whole World made happy,—and, if their own Impenitence do not prevent it, made everlaſtingly happy. — This is a ſtupendous *Scheme* indeed, worthy of God to contrive, and of the Son of God to execute; and what are the Sentiments that the Contemplation of this ſhould inſpire us with? Why, with Sentiments of *Gratitude*, too big to be uttered, and too fervent to be concealed.

And Wonderfulneſs.

The Harmony *of divine Attributes* in the Whole.

(f) LET vain Men therefore pretend what they will, 'tis owing to the Satisfaction of thy moſt precious Blood, *O bleſſed Jeſus*, and to the Puniſhment of our Sins in thy meritorious Death and Paſſion, that, in the wonderful Method of our Salvation, there was ſuch a glorious *Diſplay* of all the divine Attributes, and ſuch an *harmonious* Concurrence and Combination among them; that (g) *Mercy and Truth met together, and Righteouſneſs and Peace kiſs'd each other*; that *Wiſdom* and *Power* united in the ſame Deſign, and *Goodneſs* and *Holineſs* were not *ſeparate*; that Peace, and Pardon, and Reconciliation, and Favour to Sinners were effectually procured, and yet in ſuch a Way, and on ſuch Conditions, as well conſiſt with the *Honour* of God's Purity, the *Juſtice* of his Government, the *Authority* of his Laws againſt Sin, and the *Glory* of his moſt ſacred Attributes and Perfections; and therefore let *every Tongue aſcribe* (h) *Salvation to our God, who ſitteth upon the Throne*, and *unto the Lamb*, (i) *who loved us, and waſhed us from our Sins in his own Blood, and has made us Kings and Prieſts unto God, and his Father; to him be Glory and Dominion for ever and ever.* Amen.

(a) Iſa. lv. 1. (b) Tit. ii. 11. (c) Rev. xxii. 17. (d) John iii. 17. (e) *Seed*'s Ser. Vol. II.
(f) *Turner*'s Ser. at *Boyle*'s Lect. (g) Pſal. lxxxv. 10. (h) Rev. vii. 10. (i) Rev. i. 5, 6.

SECT.

SECT. II. CHRIST.

The EXPOSITION.

What the Word Chriſt *means.*

AFTER our Saviour's *proper* and *perſonal* Name, which diſtinguiſhed him from the reſt of his Family, the *Creed* acquaints us with another *Title*, given him in Regard to his *Office* and Dignity, which in the *Greek*, is *Chriſt*, but, in the *Hebrew*, *Meſſias*, both ſignifying a Perſon *anointed*, and conſecrated by God, to be the Author of great Deliverance to his People. *(a)* The Name of *Meſſias* occurs no where in the Old Teſtament, but in the Prophet *Daniel*; and fit it was, that it ſhould not be made too common, leſt every bold Impoſtor, (as there were ſeveral before our Saviour's Coming) pretending a Commiſſion from God, might think it advantageous to him to uſurp it. After the *Babyloniſh* Captivity, however, it * became ſo *frequent* and familiar among the *Jews*, that, in the *Chaldee Paraphraſe* now extant, there is expreſs Mention made of it in more than *ſeventy* Places, beſides the two in *Daniel*.

What Perſons were uſually anointed.

WHAT the Cuſtom of anointing might proceed from, we cannot well define; (*b*) but, in ancient Times, and in the *Eaſtern* Countries more eſpecially, where *Oil*, and other odoriferous *Spices* were in great Abundance, it ſeems to have been the general Practice, to *ſeparate* and conſecrate Perſons, deſign'd for any great *Employment* by anointing them with an Ointment made of theſe Ingredients; thereby to ſignify a plentiful *Effuſion* of ſuch *Gifts* and Graces upon them, as were proper to qualify them for ſuch high *Offices*. Now the Offices of *Kings*, *Prieſts*, and *Prophets*, being always eſteemed very *ſacred*, as thoſe, whereby God communicated his Bleſſings, and maintain'd an Intercourſe with Men, Perſons of theſe *Characters* were, by the divine Appointment, † generally *inaugurated* by this Form of *Conſecration*.

IN our Saviour indeed all theſe three Offices were *united*, which were not ſo before in any other. *Melchiſedech* was a King, and Prieſt; *David* a King, and Prophet; and *Samuel* a Prophet, and Prieſt; but the *ſacerdotal*, *regal*, and *prophetical* Dignities never met all together, but only in *Chriſt*; who, being to offer a *propitiatory* Sacrifice for the Expiation of Sins, muſt of Neceſſity become a *Prieſt*; being to reveal the *Will of God*, and his juſt Indignation againſt all Unrighteouſneſs, muſt, for that Purpoſe, be ordained a *Prophet*; and being to *tranſlate* us from a State of Death to eternal Life, (which could not be done without irreſiſtible Power) muſt, for that Reaſon, be conſtituted a *King*. But though he was inveſted with all theſe *Offices* at once, yet we are not to imagine, that they were conferred on him by any *external* Effuſion of *material* Oil, (for the anointing ‡ Oil had ceaſed ſome hundred Years before our Saviour's Coming) but,

And in what manner our Saviour was

(*a*) *Pearſon* on the Creed.

* After the Return from the Captivity of *Babylon*, when the People had, in a great Meaſure, *loſt* the Knowledge of their own Tongue, they had the Scriptures interpreted to them in the *Chaldee* Language, which they had lately learned, for ſo the Account in *Nehemiah* viii. 8. informs us. Now the conſtant Interpretation of the Scripture in this Manner produc'd, at length, a *Chaldee Verſion* of the Old Teſtament, which was uſed to be read in the *Synagogues* every Sabbath-Day; and this Verſion, being ſomewhat *paraphraſtical*, did not render the *Hebrew* Word for Word, but, with the Liberty of a brief *Expoſition*, not only took in the *Text*, but, together with it, the general *Opinions* of the moſt learned *Jews* at that Time, from whence it came to paſs, that not only the *Doctrine*, but the *Name* likewiſe of the *Meſſias* became very frequent and familiar among them. *Pearſon* on the Creed.

(*b*) *Barrow* on the Creed.

† That this was the Cuſtom among the Children of *Iſrael*, is plain from what *Samuel* ſays unto *Saul*, the firſt *Prince* that was conſtituted over them. *The Lord ſent me to anoint thee to be King over his People, over* Iſrael, 1 Sam. xv. 1. From what God ſays to *Moſes*, in relation to the *Prieſts*, *Thou ſhalt anoint* Aaron, *and his Sons, and conſecrate them, that they may miniſter to me in the Prieſt's Office*, Ex. xxx. 30. And from what he ſays to *Elijah*, with Regard to *Prophets*, *Thou ſhalt anoint* Hazael *to be King over* Syria; Jehu, *the Son of* Nimſhi, *to be King over* Iſrael; *and* Eliſha, *the Son of* Shaphat, *to be Prophet in thy Room*, 1 Kings xix. 15, 16.

‡ The *Jews* tell us, that the *anointing* Oil was *hid* in the Days of *Joſiah*, and that it ſhall be *found*, and produced again, when the *Meſſias* comes, that he may be anointed with it, and the Kings, and High Prieſts of his Days. But though the Loſs of that Oil might portend the Deſtruction of their Nation, yet the *Chriſt*, that was to come, needed no ſuch Unction for his Conſecration, there being as great a Difference between the *typical* and *correſpondent* Oil, as between the *repreſenting* and *repreſented* Chriſt. *Pearſon* on the Creed.

but, in a more *ſuper-eminent* Manner, by the real Infuſion of divine *Grace and Power*, (as the Apoſtle informs us) both at his *Conception* and *Baptiſm*, which enabled him to *do his Father's Will*, and to execute the great and weighty *Functions*, to which he had appointed him.

That he was the true Meſſias prov'd.

THAT *Jeſus of Nazareth* was the *Meſſias*, the *Chriſt*, the *anointed* of God, for the great Work of Man's *Redemption*; by his *prophetical* Office, to teach and inſtruct us; by his *ſacerdotal* to atone and intercede for us; and by his *Regal*, to preſcribe us Laws, protect us from our Enemies, and advance us to his heavenly Kingdom: This is * the prime and fundamental *Article* of our Faith; that, which diſtinguiſhes us from *Jews*, from *Heathens*, *Mahometans*, and ſome Chriſtian *Infidels*; and therefore, to *ſtrengthen*, *eſtabliſh*, and *ſettle* us in a ſound Belief hereof, we ſhall make it our Enquiry, *whether the* Jeſus, *in whom we truſt*, *be in* Reality *the true* Meſſias: *And*, to this Purpoſe, examine whether the *Meſſias*, ſo long promiſed, and ſo much expected by the *Jews*, be already come into the World; what the *Time* of his coming, according to *Prophecy*, was to have been; whether it was co-incident with the *Period*, when our *Jeſus* was upon Earth; whether the other *Characters*, which the ſacred *Penmen* draw of that *Meſſias*, meet, and are united in our *Jeſus*; and, in what Manner he executed the great and weighty *Offices* which his Title of *Chriſt* both imports, and requires of him.

From the general Expectation *of the* Meſſias, *at the Time of his coming into the World.*

THAT there was a great and eminent Perſon, of extraordinary Dignity, and far ſurpaſſing the Kings of the Earth, to make his Appearance in *Judæa*, and there erect an univerſal *Monarchy*, much about the Time, when our Saviour was born in *Bethlehem*, was a *Tradition*, that had got Footing even among the *Gentiles*, inſomuch that we find † two of their *Hiſtorians* giving us an Account of it, and the wiſe Men out of the *Eaſt* taking ‡ a long Journey to *Jeruſalem* to *(a) enquire after him, who was born King of the* Jews. And, if the *Gentiles* had Notice of this Event, we need not wonder, that the *Jews*, who had the Predictions of the Prophets always before them, ſhould entertain ſo *general* an Expectation of him, that it was become a kind of Cuſtom to *ſuſpect* every one, who made an uncommon Figure at that Time, to be the promiſed *Meſſias*; That *(b) the* Jews *ſent Prieſts and Levites from* Jeruſalem *to* John the Baptiſt, *to enquire of him*, whether he was the Man; that the Multitude, when they ſaw what our Saviour did, *(c) openly declared, of a Truth this is the Prophet*; nay, that the poor *Samaritan* Woman made this liberal Confeſſion, *(d) I know that* Meſſias *cometh, who is called Chriſt, and that, when he is come, he will tell us all Things.* (*e*) The *Coming* of the *Meſſias* indeed was an eſtabliſh'd *Article* of the *Jewiſh Faith*; inſomuch that all, who lived under the Diſpenſation of *Moſes*, were obliged to believe

* Acccordingly, we find the firſt Preachers of the Goſpel arguing and proving this Point, wherever they went. For, at *Theſſalonica*, St. *Paul*, for three Sabbath-Days, *reaſoned with the People out of the Scriptures, opening, and alledging, that Chriſt muſt needs have ſuffered, and that the* Jeſus, *whom he preached unto them, was Chriſt*, Acts xvii. 2, 3. And in *Achaia*, *Apollos*, born a *Jew*, but inſtructed in the Chriſtian Faith by *Aquila* and *Priſcilla*, *mightily convinced the* Jews, *and that publickly, ſhewing by the Scriptures that* Jeſus *was Chriſt*; Acts xviii. 28. For this indeed was made the Touchſtone, whereby Chriſtians, in thoſe Days, were tried, *whoſoever believeth, that* Jeſus *is the Chriſt*, ſays the Apoſtle, *is born of God*, 1 John li. *but he, that denieth, that* Jeſus *is the Chriſt, is a Lyar, and Antichriſt*, 1 John ii. 22.

† Thus *Suetonius*, (in the Life of *Veſpaſian*) tells us, *that there was, all the Eaſt over, an ancient and conſtant Opinion, that ſome from* Judæa *ſhould ſway the Sceptre*; *and Tacitus*, (in the fifth Book of his Hiſtory) informs us, That *many of the* Jews *were of a Perſuaſion, led thereunto by the ancient Books of their Prieſts*, that the *Eaſtern Country ſhould prevail, and ſome from* Judæa *ſhould govern all*; *which* Perſuaſion, (as *Joſephus* teſtifies) excited the *Jews* to wage War againſt the *Romans*, becauſe, at that Time, the Opinion was ſtrong, that *one of their own Country ſhould have Dominion over the World.* De Bello Jud. Lib. 7.

‡ It was a long Journey indeed, ſuppoſing they came from the utmoſt Parts of *Perſia*, as ſome will have it; for which Reaſon they imagine, that the Star appeared to them two Years before the Birth of Chriſt, and therefore allow them two Years for their Journey. The Text indeed ſeems, in ſome meaſure, to favour this Opinion, by telling us, that *Herod* put to Death all the Children of *Bethlehem*, from two Years old and under, according to the Time, that the *Magi* had ſhewed him, Mat. ii. 16. The common Opinion however is, that theſe Men came no farther than from *Arabia*, which receives ſome Countenance from the Nature of the *Gifts* they offered, *Gold*, *Frankincenſe*, and *Myrrh*, which were the native Commodities of that Country; and that, within thirteen Days, after the Birth of Chriſt, (as the Time of celebrating the *Epiphany* imports) they came to *Jeruſalem*, and, in the Whole, within forty Days (compare Matt. ii. with Luke ii. 22.) they reached *Bethlehem*, which they might eaſily do, having ſwift *Dromedaries* to ride upon, and an eager Deſire to ſee the new-born Prince. *Whitby*'s Paraphraſe on St. *Matthew*'s Goſpel.

(*a*) Mat. ii. 2. (*b*) John i. 19. (*c*) John vii. 40. (*d*) John iv. 25. (*e*) *Pearſon* on the Creed.

it, and, whoever denied it, was ſuppoſed to renounce the *Law and the Prophets*. Great Care was therefore taken to confirm Mankind in the Expectation of it, and, at this Time, it was ſo *prevalent*, that it gave ſeveral * *Impoſtors* an Opportunity of deluding the People, and drawing Followers after them, which might probably occaſion that Obſervation of our Saviour, (*a*) *I come in my Father's Name, and ye receive me not; if another ſhall come in his own Name, him ſhall ye receive.*

The Time prefix'd *for his Coming, by the Prophets.*

" BUT when was the *Time* prefix'd by the " *Prophets* for the Coming of this divine Meſ- " ſenger, this *Anointed of the Lord*, that Men " might receive him with a full *Aſſurance*, " and run no Hazard of being deceived?" The Prediction of *Jacob*, upon his Death-Bed (which all the ancient *Jews* refer to the *Meſſias*) is very expreſs in this Matter: (*b*) *The Sceptre ſhall not depart from* Judah, *nor a Law-giver from between his Feet, until* Shiloh *come, and to him ſhall the gathering of the People be.* For, (*c*) if by *Judah* we may underſtand that particular *Tribe*, in conjunction with ſome others, who returned with them from the *Babyloniſh* Captivity, and were afterwards *incorporated* with them, and called all *Judah* or *Jews*; if, by the *Sceptre*, a *Power* and Authority, a Rule and Dominion of *any kind*; by a *Law-giver*, *Magiſtrates* and Governors in *general*, tho' perhaps *ſubordinate* to others; by *Shiloh* (which properly ſignifies an *Angel* or Meſſenger of God) the Perſon of the *Meſſias*; and *by the gathering together of the People*, the Converſion of the *Gentiles*, and the Submiſſion of all Nations to the *Sceptre* of Chriſt's Kingdom, then will the plain Senſe of the Prophecy be this; — " That, how- " ever other *Tribes*, by the Conqueſt or " Invaſion of Enemies, might loſe their " *Right of Government*; yet ſhould the " *Tribe* of *Judah* preſerve it all along, and " be govern'd by their own Laws and Ma- " giſtrates, until the Coming of the *Meſſias*; " but that, upon his Appearance in the " World, and, as ſoon as his Kingdom " ſhould begin to extend itſelf therein, " then ſhould all ſettled *Form* of Govern- " ment and Magiſtracy entirely ceaſe" among them.

AGAIN, the Prophet *Haggai*, meaning to determine the *preciſe* Time of this great Perſon's Coming, has theſe remarkable Words; (*d*) — *I will ſhake all Nations, and the Deſire of all Nations ſhall come, and I will fill this Houſe with Glory, ſaith the Lord of Hoſts; the Glory of this latter Houſe ſhall be greater than the Glory of the former, ſaith the Lord of Hoſts*; which ſeem to be explained by a *parallel* Paſſage in *Malachi*, (*e*) *The Lord, whom ye ſeek, ſhall ſuddenly come into the Temple, even the Meſſenger of the Covenant, whom ye delight in:* For, if *by ſhaking all Nations*, we may be allowed to mean thoſe *Wars*, and ſundry Commotions, which happen'd in the World, before the Erection of the *Roman Empire*; if, *by the Deſire of all Nations*, and the *Meſſenger of the Covenant*, that *illuſtrious Perſon*, in whom the World would have ſo great an Intereſt, that they could not but earneſtly *deſire*, and *expect* him; and, if *by his filling the latter Houſe with Glory*, the Majeſty of his *auguſt* Preſence, frequenting the *ſecond Temple*, and thereby adding † a more conſpicuous Luſtre to it; then muſt the Senſe of the Prophecy be — " That, " upon the Ceſſation of the Civil Wars, " and the Diſturbances of the *Roman State*, " (which happened in the Reign of *Auguſ-* " *tus*)

* *Gamaliel*, in his Speech in the *Jewiſh Council*, makes mention of two; *Theudas, to whom a Number of Men, about four Hundred, joined themſelves; and one* Judas *of* Galilee, *who, in the Days of Taxing, drew away much People after him*, Acts iv. 36, 37. *Joſephus* indeed tells us of a certain *Magician*, called *Theudas*, who, under the Government of *Fadus*, deluded many, Antiq. Lib. 20. but this *Theudas* could not be the ſame with that of *Gamaliel*. *Gamaliel*'s was before *Judas* of *Galilee*, and yet *Judas* aroſe *in the Days of the Taxing*, which was under the Emperor *Auguſtus*, and exactly at the Birth of Chriſt: So that they were two *different* Perſons, but, very probably, *Father* and *Son*, or *Tutor* and *Scholar*, who, as they agreed in the ſame Folly and Madneſs, might therefore aſſume the ſame Name. *Whitby*'s Annot. on the Acts.

(*a*) John v. 43. (*b*) Gen. xlix. 10. (*c*) Bp *Sherlock*'s Diſſertation 3. in his Uſe and Intent of Prophecy. (*d*) Haggai ii. 7. 9. (*e*) Mal. iii. 1.

† The *Jews* themſelves have obſerved, that the moſt diſtinguiſhing Privileges of the firſt Temple, ſuch as the *Urim* and *Thummim*, by which the High Prieſt was miraculouſly *inſtructed* in the Will of God; *the Ark of the Covenant*, from whence God gave his Anſwers by a clear and audible Voice; *the Fire upon the Altar*, which came down from Heaven, and immediately conſumed the Sacrifice; the *divine Preſence*, or *Habitation* with them between the two *Cherubims* uſually called the *Shechinah*; and *the Spirit of Prophecy*, wherewith thoſe, that were called to the *prophetick* Office, were endued, were wanting in the *Second*; ſo that there is no other Way of imagining, how this latter Temple could *excel* the former in Glory, (for it was inferior to it in Point of Structure) but by the Coming of him into it, in whom all theſe *Signs* of divine Glory were far more eminently contain'd, and that was the *Meſſias*. *Pearſon* on the Creed.

" *tus)* and during the Continuance of the " *Temple*, which * *Zerubbabel* built, the " *Meſſias* ſhould be born, and, by his " reſorting conſtantly to that Temple, " make it more renowned, than that of " *Solomon*."

ONCE more, the Prophet *Daniel*, (as he was inſtructed by the Angel *Gabriel*) in order to fix the Period of this great *Advent*, makes his ſtanding *Æra*, the Time of the Publication of the *Royal Edict*, which gave the *Jews* leave to return home, and rebuild their ruinous City, and from thence he makes his Computation;—(*a*) *Seventy Weeks are determined upon the People, and upon the whole City*; —— *know ye therefore, and underſtand, that, from the going forth of the Commandment to reſtore, and to rebuild* Jeruſalem, *unto the* Meſſias *the Prince, ſhall be ſeven Weeks*; *and threeſcore and two Weeks the Streets ſhall be built again, and the Wall, even in troubleſome Times. And, after threeſcore and two Weeks, ſhall the* Meſſias *be cut off, but not for himſelf*; *and the People of the Prince that ſhall come, ſhall deſtroy the City, and the Sanctuary, and the End thereof ſhall be with a Flood, and to the End of the War Deſolations are determined.* Now, if by *Weeks* here (as all agree) we are to underſtand *Weeks of Years*, and that *ſeventy Weeks* therefore will amount to *four Hundred and ninety Years*; if, (*b*) by the *Commandment* is meant (as moſt learned Men imagine) the *Decree*, which *Artaxerxes Longinus*, King of *Perſia*, granted to *Ezra*, in that Commiſſion wherewith he ſent him into *Judæa*; and, if by *the People of the Prince, that ſhall come*, are intended, the *Roman Armies*, under the Command of *Titus*, who ſhould ruſh, like a *Torrent*, upon the *Jews*, and utterly deſtroy their City and Temple; then will it follow, that, from whatever Time we date this *Royal Edict*, there will not be above five Hundred Years between *that* and the Time of the *Meſſias*, and from *thence* not many Years, more to the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*.

And that applied to our Jeſus.

THE Truth is, all the above cited *Prophecies*, which pretend to *limit* the Time of *Chriſt*'s Coming, are bounded by the Deſtruction of the *Jewiſh Polity* and Government: So that it was highly neceſſary that, before the Arrival of that ſad remarkable *Event*, they ſhould receive their *ultimate Completion*: And therefore (to argue accordingly) ſince all Manner of Government among the *Jews*, not many Years after our Saviour's *Paſſion*, was quite loſt and aboliſh'd: Since they, ever ſince, have been driven from their native Country, and forced to live in a deſpiſed forſaken Condition, without either *Prince* or *Law-giver* among them, without any *Prophet* to comfort them, or any *Meſſenger* from Heaven to promiſe them any happy *Reſtoration*: Since the *Temple*, which the Prophets ſpeak of, was no ways comparable to *Solomon*'s, nor could, in any Reſpect, pretend to *rival* it, but only upon Account of the *Honour*, which the *Meſſias*, when he came, would do it by reſorting to it, *there* to inſtruct the People, and there to join in divine Service; but now all this is at an End; the *Temple* pulled down, and will † never be *rebuilt*; the *Service* extinct, and will never be *revived*: And, laſtly, ſince the *Meſſias* was to come, and to finiſh the Work, for which he was ſent into the World (*c*) *to make an End of Sins, to make Reconciliation for Iniquity, and to bring in everlaſting Righteouſneſs*, &c. in a certain Period of Time, between the *Decree* granted to *Ezra* to return to *Judæa*, and the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem* by the *Roman* Armies;

* The Temple, which was ſtanding in our Saviour's Time, and to which he ſo conſtantly reſorted, was not built by *Zerubbabel*, but by *Herod the Great*; and yet might very properly be called the *latter* or *ſecond* Temple. To repair, enlarge, beautify, or even rebuild, did not denominate it another Temple, but the ſame continued, only in greater Splendor. To this Purpoſe it is remarkable, that the *Jews*, who magnify ſo much *Herod*'s Building, never ſpeak of it as a *third* Temple, but include *that*, as well as *Zerubbabel*'s, under the Name of the *ſecond Houſe*, or Temple; and, whenever they mention the *third Houſe*, they mean by it the *future* Temples which they ſtill expect to be built for them in the Days of the *Meſſias*. Nay, *Joſephus* himſelf, who aſſert, that *Herod* rebuilt the Temple in ſo much Splendor, does, nevertheleſs, call *Zerubbabel*'s the *laſt*, and, conſequently computes the Time, that the *laſt* Temple ſtood, not from its Rebuilding by *Herod*, but from the ſecond Year of *Cyrus*, when *Zerubbabel* had Commiſſion to rebuild it, though the Building was not proſperouſly carried on, 'till ſome Time after. *Berriman*'s Ser. at *Boyle*'s Lect

(*a*) Dan. ix. 24, *&c.* (*b*) *Prideaux*'s Connect. and *Grotius* de Verit.

† In the Times of *Adrian*, *Conſtantine*, and *Julian*, (as St. *Chryſoſtom* informs us, Lib. 2. againſt the *Jews*) the People attempted to build a *new Temple*, but were always hinder'd; nay *Ammianus Macellinus* (who was no Chriſtian Author) reports (in his 23d Book) that, whenever they endeavour'd to do it, *Balls* of Fire broke out of the Foundation, and deſtroyed their Work. *Grotius* on the Truth of the Chriſtian Religion.

(*c*) Dan. ix. 24.

Armies; and ſince now it is above *two Thouſand* Years, from the paſſing of that Decree, and above *ſixteen Hundred*, ſince that wicked City was laid in Aſhes; it cannot but be admitted, —— that, as far as theſe Prophecies are concerned, the *Time*, appointed for the Coming of the *Meſſias*, is long ſince paſſed and gone: And therefore *Woe unto us*, (may the *Jews*, that conſider this, ſay) becauſe the *Sceptre is departed from* Judah, and the Son of *David* is not come: *Woe unto us*, becauſe our Temple is *(a) laid low, it is laid low, even to the Ground, even to the Duſt*; how then ſhall the *Meſſenger of the Covenant, the Deſire of all Nations*, frequent it? *Woe unto us*, becauſe the *ſeventy Weeks* of *Daniel* are long ſince elapſed, and *Deſolation* is come upon us to the uttermoſt, and yet the *Meſſias the Prince* regardeth us not. But, to pacify theſe *Complaints*, *we have found him, of whom* Moſes, *in the Law and the Prophets did write*, Jeſus *of* Nazareth, *the Son of* Joſeph; for, whatever they foretold of the promiſed *Meſſias*, that plainly appears to be verified in him.

Things foretold of the Meſſias *as to his* Birth.

Our Saviour was deſcended of the Stock of *Iſrael*, of the Tribe of *Judah*, and of the Family of *David*; was born (by a *particular* Providence) in the Town of *Bethlehem*, the Son of *God*, and the Son of a *pure Virgin*, becauſe the *Meſſias* was ſo promis'd; (*b*) the Seed *of* Abraham, *in whom all the Nations of the Earth ſhould be bleſt*; (*c*) the Shiloh, *unto whom the gathering of the People ſhould be*; (*d*) *the Root of* Jeſſe, *which ſhould ſtand for an Enſign of the People*; (*e*) a Ruler out of *Bethlehem, whoſe Goings-forth have been of old from everlaſting*; (*f*) a *Firſt-born, higher than the Kings of the Earth*; and (*g*) *Immanuel*, whoſe Birth was to be miraculous, and his Mother a *Virgin*.

Condition *of* Life *and* Death.

Our Saviour came into the World in a *mean* and deſpicable Condition of Life, and, when he entered upon his *prophetick* Office, his Appearance was ſo very *inglorious*, that it raiſed in the *Jews* a Neglect of his *Works*, and a Contempt of his *Doctrine*, which ſoon was heightened into Rancour and Revenge, and ended, at laſt, in a cruel and ignominious Death, attended with ſore Aggravations, with vile *Injuſtice*, cruel *Inſults*, bitter *Revilings*, and an utter *Deſtitution* of all kind of Comfort; and yet endured with the greateſt *Meekneſs* and Magnanimity, with *Prayers* for his Enemies, with an Intent to *expiate* our Sins, to *reconcile* us to God, and to procure a good *Iſſue* of all his Sufferings: And all this, becauſe the Prophets had repreſented the *Meſſias*, as (*h*) *a Man of Sorrows, and acquainted with Grief, in whom was no Form or Comelineſs, nor any Beauty, that we ſhould deſire him*; as one (*i*) *deſpiſed, and rejected of Men, from whom they hid their Faces, and eſteemed him not*; againſt whom (*k*) *the Mouth of the Wicked, and the Mouth of the Deceitful were to be open'd, to compaſs him about with Words of Hatred, and to fight againſt him without a Cauſe*: Againſt whom, (*l*) *all, that looked on him, would ſhoot out the Lip, and ſhake the Head*, ſo that, (*m*) *when he looked for ſome to have Pity on him, there would be none*, and he therefore be forced to cry out, (*n*) *My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me, and art ſo far from my Help*: Becauſe they had repreſented him, I ſay, (*o*) *as a Lamb brought to the Slaughter, and as a Sheep before the Shearer, dumb, and not opening his Mouth*, except *to* (*p*) *make Interceſſion for the Tranſgreſſors*; and, all this while, (*q*) *bearing our Griefs, and carrying our Sorrows*, (*r*) *being wounded for our Tranſgreſſions, and bruiſed for our Iniquities*, until (*s*) *God ſhould ſee of the Travail of his Soul, and be ſatisfied.*

And his Miniſtry *verified by our Saviour.*

Once more, our Saviour (as the *Evangeliſt* informs us) (*t*) *went about all the Cities, teaching in the Synagogues, and preaching the Goſpel of the Kingdom, and healing every Sickneſs, and every Diſeaſe among the People.* His *Doctrine* was plain and ſimple: By the Uſe of *Parables*, and familiar Compariſons, apt to win upon the *Affections*, and ſuitable to the *Capacity* of the meaneſt Hearers; and his *Works* were Works of Charity and Love, deſigned for the Succour and Relief of Perſons in Diſtreſs. The Lame, the Blind, the Dumb, the Maim'd, the Weak, the Ignorant, the Sinner, theſe were the Objects of his Compaſſion; becauſe the Prophets had foretold, that, upon the Coming of the *Meſſias* (*u*) *the Eyes of the Blind ſhall be open'd, and the Ears of the Deaf*

(*a*) Iſa. xxvi. 5. (*b*) Gen. xxii. 18. (*c*) Gen. xlix. 10. (*d*) Iſa. x. 10. (*e*) Micah v. 2. (*f*) Pſal. lxxxix. 27. (*g*) Iſa. vii. 14. (*h*) Iſa. liii 2. (*i*) Ver. 3. (*k*) Pſal. cix. 2. (*l*) Pſal. xxii. 6. (*m*) Pſal. lxix. 20. (*n*) Pſal. xxii. 1. (*o*) Iſa. liii. 6, 7. (*p*) Ver. 12. (*q*) Ver. 4. (*r*) Ver. 5. (*s*) Ver. 11. (*t*) Mat. iv. xxiii. (*u*) Iſa. xxv. 5, 6.

Deaf ſhould be unſtopped, the lame Man ſhould leap as an Hart, and the Tongue of the Dumb ſhould ſing; that (*a*) *he ſhould feed his Flock like a Shepherd, gather the Lambs with his Arm; carry them in his Boſom, and gently lead thoſe, that were with Young*; that (*b*) *they ſhould teach no more every Man his Neighbour, and every Man his Brother, ſaying, know the Lord, for all ſhould know him, from the leaſt to the greateſt of them*, becauſe (*c*) *Precept upon Precept, Precept upon Precept, Line upon Line, Line upon Line, here a little, and there a little, with ſtammering Lips, and another Tongue, ſhould he ſpeak to the People, 'till* (*d*) *the Earth ſhould be full with the Knowledge of the Lord, as the Waters cover the Sea.*

His Miracles both in their Nature *and* Manner *ſurpaſſing every Thing.*

GREAT, and many indeed were the *Miracles*, which *Moſes* and the reſt of the Prophets wrought for the *Ratification* of the Law, and the *Demonſtration* of God's conſtant *Preſence* with his People; but yet, all theſe, done by ſo *many ſeveral* Perſons, in the Space of above *three* Thouſand Years, fall far ſhort, both in *Number* and *Merit*, of thoſe, which, in Teſtimony of his divine *Miſſion*, our Saviour Chriſt did in *three Years*. For, (*e*) by him we behold natural *Defects* ſupplied, accidental *Infirmities* repaired, the moſt malignant and inveterate *Diſeaſes*, ſuch as no Length of Time, no Skill, no Remedies, no Expence could aſſuage, perfectly cured; *Winds* and *Seas* reſtrained and quieted; the Power of Death vanquiſhed; Perſons, really dead, commanded back again to Life and Health, and the *Rage* of Devils, with one Word's ſpeaking, actually ſubdued; ſo that well might the (*f*) *People be amazed, and queſtion among themſelves, ſaying, what Thing is this? What new Doctrine is this? For, with Authority, he commandeth even the unclean Spirits, and they do obey him.* And equal to the *Greatneſs*, was the *Manner* of our Lord's performing his Miracles, which was in an Inſtant, with a Touch, with a Word: For (*g*) *Peace be ſtill*, calmed the Storm; (*h*) *be opened*, unſtopped the deaf Man's Ears; (*i*) *be thou clean*, cured the Leper; (*k*) *young Man ariſe*, reſtored the Widow's Son; and (*l*) *Lazarus come forth*, raiſed him from the Grave, who had been four Days dead. (*m*) His *chiding the Fever*, recovered St. *Peter*'s Mother-in-Law; (*n*) his taking the Ruler's Daughter by the Hand, *revived the Damſel*; (*o*) his touching the two blind Men's Eyes, reſtored their Sight; and, (*p*) when Multitudes of diſeaſed People *beſought him, that they might only touch the* Hem *of his Garment, as many as touched it, were made perfectly whole:* Such Reaſon had our Lord himſelf to appeal to his Miracle, (*q*) *The Works, which the Father hath given me to finiſh, the ſame Works, that I do, bear witneſs of me, that the Father hath ſent me.*

The Perſonal Qualities *of the* Meſſias *anſwer'd in our* Saviour's.

THE *Prophets*, in drawing the Character of the *Meſſias*, have made (*r*) *the Sceptre of his Kingdom a right Sceptre, and anointed him with the Oil of Gladneſs above his Fellows.* They (*s*) *have put Righteouſneſs for the Girdle of his Loins, and Faithfulneſs for the Girdle of his Reins*; infuſed into him (*t*) *the Spirit of Wiſdom and Underſtanding, the Spirit of Counſel and Might, the Spirit of Knowledge, and of the Fear of the Lord*; and given him (*u*) *the Tongue of the Learned, that he ſhould know how to ſpeak a Word in Seaſon to him, that is weary.* They have repreſented his Lowlineſs, (*x*) *in his riding upon an Aſs*; and his Meekneſs, (*y*) *in the bruiſed Reed, which he ſhould not break, and the ſmoaking Flax, which he ſhould not quench*; his Peaceableſs, in making him (*z*) *neither ſtrive, nor cry, ſo that no Man ſhould hear his Voice in the Streets*; his Patience, in (*a*) *giving his Back to the Smiter, and not hiding his Face from Shame and Spitting*; and his invincible Courage in the Service of God, (*b*) *in ſetting his Face like a Flint, and not turning away his Back.* Now as theſe were the *moral* Characters of the promiſed *Meſſias*, a ſhort Inſpection into the *Story* of our Saviour's Life, as it is written, (without any Semblance of Artifice or Guile) by Perſons intimately acquainted with him, and who were not afraid to ſeal the Truth of it with the Teſtimony of their Blood, will ſoon convince us, that, in his ſincere *Piety* and unſpotted Innocence, in his incomparable *Faculty* of Teaching, and *Sagacity* of Knowledge; in his exceeding *Meekneſs* and *Gentleneſs*; his unparalelled *Patience*, boundleſs *Charity*, invincible *Fortitude*, and, in ſhort, in all Manner of Holineſs and Virtue, he has not only equall'd, but vaſtly ſurpaſſed the moſt lively *Strokes*, that

(*a*) Iſa. iv. 11. (*b*) Jer. xxxi. 34. (*c*) Iſa. xxviii. 10. (*d*) Iſa. xi. 9. (*e*) *Stanhope*'s Ser. at *Boyle*'s Lect. (*f*) Mark i. 27. (*g*) Mark iv. 39. (*h*) Mark vii. 34. (*i*) Mark i. 41. (*k*) Luke vii. 14. (*l*) John xi. 43. (*m*) Luke iv. 39. (*n*) Matt. xi. 25. (*o*) Matt. xi. 29. (*p*) Matt. xiv. 36. (*q*) John v. 36. (*r*) Pſ. xlv. 6, 7. (*s*) Iſa. xi. 5. (*t*) Iſa. xi. 2. (*u*) Iſa. v. 4. (*x*) Zec. ix. 9. (*y*) Iſa. iv. 11. (*z*) Iſa. xlii. 2. (*a*) Iſa. l. 6. (*b*) Iſa. l. 7, 5.

that thoſe heavenly-inſpired *Painters* have employed, in drawing a finiſhed *Piece* of their much-beloved *Meſſias*.

And the Extent of his Kingdom, in the Propagation of the Goſpel.

THE Prophets again, in deſcribing the extenſive Empire, that ſhall belong to the *Meſſias*, have taken care *(a) to give him the Heathen for his Inheritance, and the uttermoſt Parts of the Earth for his Poſſeſſion; (b) to eſtabliſh the Mountain of the Lord's Houſe in the Top of the Mountains, and to exalt it above the Hills, that all Nations may flow unto it*; and therefore ſay they unto him, *(c) Lift up thine Eyes round about, and ſee; all they gather themſelves together, they come to thee: Thy Sons ſhall come from far, and thy Daughters ſhall be nurſed by thy Side*; for, *(d) from the Riſing of the Sun, even to the going down of the ſame, thy Name ſhall be great among the Gentiles, and, in every Place, Incenſe ſhall be offered unto thy Name, and a pure Offering*. But now, by a *miraculous* Succeſs in the *Propagation* of our Saviour's Goſpel, all theſe Predictions were fulfilled: For, no ſooner were the Apoſtles commiſſioned to preach theſe *glad Tidings*, and, for that Purpoſe, endued with *Power from on high* by a plentiful Effuſion of the Holy Ghoſt, but *(e) their Sound went into all the Earth, and their Words into the Ends of the World*; inſomuch, *(f)* that the Writers of *Eccleſiaſtical* Hiſtory do, with one Conſent, agree, that *Scythia*, *India*, *Gaul*, and *Egypt*, all the moſt diſtant Parts of the *Globe*, that were then known, had the Doctrine of Chriſt convey'd to them in leſs than *forty Years*, i. e. before the Deſtruction of the *Jewiſh* State by *Titus*. And what Succeſs the Voice of theſe Preachers had, in the ſeveral Countries, through which it ſounded, we may learn from the ancient *Apologiſts*, who, before two Centuries were run out, pleaded for *Chriſtianity* upon the Account of its vaſt and incredible *Numbers*, and repreſented to the *Heathen* Emperors, "That their Courts, their Camps, "their Cities, their Provinces were all full "of them, and that it would be impoſſible "to extirpate them, without deſtroying the "far greater Part of their Subjects." In ſhort, the *Courſe* of the Goſpel, at this Time, was ſo *rapid* and amazing, that it left, as it were, the Eyes and Obſervations of Men behind it; ſtill gaining, as it went along, mighty *Spoils* from all Religions, and diſpelling the *groſs Darkneſs*, which covered the Face of the Earth, that *(g) the Gentiles might come to its Light, and Kings to the Brightneſs of its Shining*.

Now, if we conſider the *Inſtruments* under God of this great **Revolution*, a few poor *illiterate* Men, of obſcure Birth and Parentage, of the meaneſt Education, of the plaineſt and moſt ſimple Underſtandings, *unpoliſh'd* by Learning and Eloquence, *unimprov'd* by Experience and Converſe, Men of no Subtilty, no Art, no Addreſs, and who had no Manner of Authority, Intereſt, or Repute in the World: If we conſider the *Doctrine*, they taught, which was flatly *repugnant* to all other Religions, that, by long *Tradition*, publick Laws, and mighty Enforcements, had gain'd an Eſtabliſhment; which propounded *Myſteries*, impoſſible to be comprehended, and therefore incongruous to Men's *Pride*, and deliver'd *Precepts* of great Rigour and Auſterity, and therefore *averſe* to their natural *Inclinations*, and all this, upon the Conſideration of *diſtant* and *unſeen* Rewards: If we conſider the *Manner* of their teaching theſe harſh and ungrateful Leſſons, which was *(h) not with the enticing Words of Man's Wiſdom*, to allure; not with the Subtilty of *Wit*, and Strength of *Diſputation*, to perſuade; not with the Force of the *ſecular* Arm, or *corporal* Menaces, to compel Mankind into a Compliance, but in the *Spirit of Meekneſs*, and Simplicity of Language, whoſe only *Strength* and *Beauty* conſiſted in the *clear Sincerity*, which ſhined through it, *(i) recommending themſelves*

Which was quite miraculous.

(a) Pſal. ii. 8. *(b)* Iſa. ii. 2. *(c)* Iſa. lx. 4. *(d)* Mal. i. 11. *(e)* Rom. x. 18. *(f)* Bp *Atterbury's* Ser. Vol. I. *(g)* Iſa. lx. 2, 3.

* The Words of an *ancient* Writer of the Church upon this Occaſion are very remarkable, and deſerve reciting. "What King, ſays he, was ever ſo powerful, as to fill the *Ears* and the *Tongues* of all the Inhabitants "of the Earth? What King ever made *Laws* ſo pious, and ſober, as to have an Influence from one End "of the World to the other? Whoever was able to aboliſh the barbarous and cruel Cuſtoms of the "Heathens by merciful and gentle Laws? Whoever met with ſo long, and ſo great an *Oppoſition*, and had "Force enough, not only not to be cruſh'd, but to thrive, and flouriſh under this Oppreſſion? Whoever ſent "about the World a People *obſcure*, and ſcarcely heard of before? Whoever beſtow'd on his Soldiers ſuch a "*ſpiritual* Armour, that they gave Proof to their Enemies of Minds *hardy*, and ſtrong as the *Adamant*? What "King ever ſhewed ſuch Puiſſance and Force after his Death? Whoever erected ſuch Trophies over his Ene"mies? Whoever fill'd all Places, Countries, and Cities of the *Greeks*, and *Barbarians*, with ſtately *Palaces*, "and conſecrated *Temples*? Euſeb. Hiſt. Eccl. Lib. 10. Chap. 4.

(h) 1 Cor. ii. 4. *(i)* 2 Cor. iv. 2.

themſelves to every Man's Conſcience in the Sight of God: If we conſider theſe Things, I ſay, we can no ways conceive, that ſo many Nations ſhould forſake their own *Religions*, which they had a long while been accuſtom'd to, merely to embrace ſuch *Precepts*, as were diſagreeable to their Humours and Propenſions, and would expoſe them to all Kind of Miſeries and Perſecutions; that they ſhould do this, upon the *Authority* of *one*, who was condemn'd and executed as a vile *Malefactor*, and by the *Perſuaſion* of ſuch, as were both *illiterate* and obſcure to the laſt Degree; that, in ſhort, they ſhould be *entic'd* with Words without Eloquence, *convinc'd* without Argumentation, and *conſtrain'd* without Force or Violence; this we can never imagine poſſible to have come to paſs, had not the Doctrine, which, in Deſpite of all Diſcouragement, did thus prevail, come from Heaven, and *the Author and Finiſher of our Faith* been the true *Meſſias:* And therefore, to *recapitulate* what has been advanc'd in Proof of this great Article.

A Summary of the whole Argument.

If a *Perſon* of moſt eminent Note and Diſtinction, whom the *Jews* called the *Meſſias*, was, upon account of ſundry Predictions, all along expected to come into the World; if the *Time* of his coming was limited to a certain *Period*, before the Diſſolution of the *Jewiſh* State and Polity, which is now long ſince elaps'd; if, at his coming into the World, he was to be born in a certain *Tribe*, of a certain *Family*, at a certain *Place*, and in a ſtrange and miraculous Manner; was to be endued with ſuch *perſonal Qualities*, undergo ſuch *Cruelties*, work ſuch *Miracles*, and teach a *Doctrine*, which was to be receiv'd by all Nations: Then is our *Jeſus*, who was born at the ſame *Time*, of the ſame *Lineage*, of the ſame *Family*, in the ſame *Place*, and in the ſame *Manner*; who was poſſeſs'd of the ſame *Qualities*, perform'd the ſame *Wonders*, ſuffer'd the ſame *Indignities*, and publiſh'd a *Religion*, which was attended with the ſame *Succeſs*, that the Prophets had foretold of the *Meſſias*, whenever he ſhou'd come; then was our *Jeſus*, I ſay, (according to all the *Characters*, that were given to diſtinguiſh him by) moſt certainly the true *Meſſias*, or Chriſt, (*a*) *which every Tongue is bound to confeſs, to the Glory of God the Father.* And now, for a farther Explication of this Point, we have nothing more to do, but only to obſerve, in what Manner it is, that he executes the great Offices of *Prophet*, *Prieſt*, and *King*, which are all compriz'd in this one Title of *Chriſt*.

How *our Saviour executes the Office of* Prophet.

That the *Meſſias*, when he came, was to appear in the Character of a *Prophet*, is manifeſt from that Paſſage in *Iſaiah*, which our Saviour in the Synagogue turn'd to; (*b*) *The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, becauſe the Lord hath anointed me to preach good Tidings unto the Meek; he hath ſent me to bind up the Broken-hearted, to proclaim Liberty to the Captives, and the opening of the Priſon to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable Year of the Lord.* And therefore the People were not miſtaken, when, upon our Lord's raiſing the *Widow's* Son, (*c*) *they were amaz'd, and glorified God, ſaying, that a great Prophet was riſen up among them; and that God had viſited his People.* And indeed, conſidering what the Apoſtle tells us, that, tho' (*d*) *no Man hath ſeen God at any Time*, yet *the only-begotten Son, who is in the Boſom of the Father, he hath declared him to us*; that, (*e*) for this Purpoſe he came down from Heaven in human Nature, (which gave a great Advantage to his *Miniſtry*) and in that Nature made a full *Declaration* of his Father's Will to Mankind; *confirm'd* that Declaration with the *Atteſtation* of ſundry Kinds of Miracles; recommended what he thus *atteſted* by his own Example; and ſeal'd the Truth of it with the Teſtimony of his Blood, we cannot but infer with the two Diſciples (*f*) *concerning this Jeſus of Nazareth*, that he muſt have *been a Prophet, mighty in Deed and Word, before God, and all the People.*

Prieſt.

That the *Meſſias*, when he came, was to appear in the Capacity of a *Prieſt*, is evident from what the *Royal* Prophet puts in his Mouth, addreſſing himſelf to his heavenly Father, (*g*) *Sacrifice and Offering thou didſt not require, but a Body haſt thou prepared me. In Burnt-Offerings, and Sacrifice for Sin thou haſt had no Pleaſure, then ſaid I, Lo, I come to do thy Will, O my God*; whereupon his heavenly Father is made to reply, (*h*) *Thou art a Prieſt for ever after* * *the*

(*a*) Phil. ii. 11. (*b*) Iſa. lxi. 1. (*c*) Luke vii. 16. (*d*) John i. 18. (*e*) *Scot's* Mediator. (*f*) Luke xxiv. 19. (*g*) Pſ. xl. 8, &c. and Heb. x. 5, &c. (*h*) Pſ. cx. 4.

† Wherein this Order differed from that of *Aaron*, Expoſitors are not agreed: For ſome imagine, that the Difference lay in the *Sacrifices*, which they offered, *viz.* that *Melchiſedech* ſacrificed only *inanimate* Things, whereas *Aaron* ſacrificed *Animals* likewiſe. But, as Animals were generally uſed in Sacrifices, before the *Inſtitution*

the Order of Melchiſedech, who was both King and Prieſt in one Perſon. Now the proper Buſineſs of a Prieſt, of whatſoever Order, was to *atone* for Sin, to *bleſs* the Congregation, and to *intercede* for their Pardon; upon which Account the Apoſtle tells us, that, (*a*) *through the Offering of the Body of Jeſus Chriſt once for all, we are* ſanctified; that (*b*) *God, having raiſed up his Son Jeſus, has ſent him to* bleſs *us, in turning away every one from his Iniquities*; *and* (*c*) *that he is able alſo to ſave them to the uttermoſt, that come unto God by him, ſeeing he ever liveth to make* Interceſſion *for us.*

And King. THAT the *Meſſias* likewiſe, when he came, was to appear in the Capacity of a *King*, needs no Citations to prove, becauſe the *Jews* are fond enough of that *Character*; only we may obſerve, that the Kingdom of the *Meſſias* was to be of a different Kind, than what they generally imagined and expected; that, in his Reign, (*d*) *the Wolf was to dwell with the Lamb, and the Leopard lie down with the Kid, and the Calf, and the young Lion, and the Fatling together, and a little Child ſhould lead them*; that (*e*) *Nation ſhould not then lift up Sword againſt Nation, neither ſhould they learn War any more*, becauſe, (*f*) *in his Time the Righteous ſhould flouriſh, yea and abundance of Peace, ſo long as the Moon endureth.* And, in order to produce theſe bleſſed Effects in the World our Saviour has made Humility and Meekneſs, brotherly Kindneſs and Mercy, Peace and Righteouſneſs, and (*g*) *whatſoever Things are true, whatſoever Things are honeſt, whatſoever Things are juſt, whatſoever Things are pure, whatſoever Things are of good Report*, the Laws and Genius of his Kingdom; whereby he rules and governs us here, and at the laſt great Day, is to reward or puniſh us hereafter: And therefore, in a due Senſe of this, (*h*) *let every one, that nameth the Name of Chriſt*, i. e. profeſſes *Jeſus* to be *Chriſt*, and himſelf to be his *Follower*, *depart from Evil*, and endeavour to (*i*) *adorn his Doctrine in all Things, looking for that bleſſed Hope, and the glorious Appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt.*

The OBJECTION.

" BUT (*k*) may not our Profeſſion of
" a *Chriſt* be *vain* and groundleſs, if
" the Belief of it be a *novel Conceit*, un-
" ſupported by any *plain* and *literal* Predic-
" tions, and only depending on the *Fancies*
" of thoſe, that affect *myſtical* and *figura-*
" *tive* Interpretations, how diſtant ſoever
" from the *original* Senſe of the Scriptures?
" Whatever may be ſuggeſted to the con-
" trary, (*l*) the Expectation of a *Meſſias*
" was not ſo *general* among the *Jews* in our
" Saviour's Time, as we may imagine; be-
" cauſe, had it been ſo, we cannot conceive,
" why (*m*) *John* the Baptiſt ſhould *ſend two*
" *of his Diſciples to him* on purpoſe to en-
" quire, whether he was the Perſon or not.
" However this be, 'tis certain, that the (*n*)
" *Prophetical Meſſias*, whom the *Jews* ex-
" pected in the Days of *Jeſus*, was to be
" their *National* Saviour and Deliverer, a
" *temporal* Prince, who was to *reſcue* them
" from Bondage and Oppreſſion, and eſta-
" bliſh a *flouriſhing* Empire and Dominion
" over them. Upon this Account we may
" ſuppoſe, that the *Meſſias the Prince* is not
" yet come; but then we are to conſider, that
" his coming is *conditional*, and intirely de-
" pendent on the *good Pleaſure* of God,
" which can never be obtained without
" *Repentance*. (*o*) The *Sins* of the *Jews*
" therefore are the true Cauſe, which *with-*
" *holds* this great Bleſſing from them; and
" perhaps it may be in the Divine Counſels,
" that he ſhould not appear, until the *laſt*
Days,

tution of the *Aaronical* Prieſthood, there is no Queſtion to be made, but that *he*, who was ſo eminently the *Prieſt of the moſt high God*, made uſe of the accuſtom'd Sacrifices, eſpecially, ſince his Prieſthood was ſo ſignal a *Type* of Chriſt's, whoſe Sacrifice was an *animate* one, *viz.* his own Body. The Difference between theſe two Orders then lay, not in their Sacrifices, but more properly in this, —— that, whereas the *regal* Power was *united* to *Melchiſedech*'s Prieſthood, it was wholly *ſeparate* from *Aaron*'s. Both the *regal* and *ſacerdotal* Office indeed were *originally* in *Moſes*, but, by God's Command, he devolved the *Prieſthood* upon his Brother *Aaron*, whilſt himſelf retain'd the *regal* Office. Thus was the *Prieſthood*, ſeparate from the *regal* Power, ſettled upon *Aaron*'s Family; and in this Manner it was to continue, 'till the Coming of our Saviour, who re-united theſe two Offices in himſelf, and ſo became a *royal* Prieſt after the ancient Order of *Melchiſedech*. *Scot*'s Chriſtian Life, Part II.

(*a*) Heb. x. 10. (*b*) Acts iii. 26. (*c*) Heb. vii. 27. (*d*) Iſa. xi. 6. (*e*) Iſa. ii. 4. (*f*) Pſal. lxxii. 7. (*g*) Phil. iv. 8. (*h*) 2 Tim. ii. 19. (*i*) 2 Tit. ii. 10, 13. (*k*) Grounds and Reaſons of the Chriſtian Religion, Part I. Chap 2. (*l*) Scheme of literal Prophecy, Chap. 1. (*m*) Mat. xi. 2, 3. (*n*) Moral Philoſopher, Page 328. (*o*) Bechai in Legem.

" *Days* (as the *Prophets* term it) (*a*) which " ſeem to approach very near to the *End* " *of the World.* In the mean Time, what- " ever Opinion we may have of *Jeſus*, he " could not be a *Prophet ſent from God*, " becauſe he abrogated the *Law*, which " was confeſſedly of God's own *Inſtitution*, " and by him declared to be of *perpetual* " *Obligation.* The *Miracles* therefore, " which he pretended to work in Confir- " mation of his *Commiſſion*, if they were " not *lying Wonders*, were, very probably, " *magical Enchantments*, becauſe we cannot " conceive, how God could authorize any " Perſon (and who himſelf gave out, that " he came, *(b) not to deſtroy, but fulfil the* " *Law)* to make *Innovations* in thoſe Com- " mandments, where he had expreſly for- " bidden the leaſt (*c*) *Addition or Dimu-* " *nition.* Nor could he be a *Prieſt*, as is " pretended, becauſe his Death was no " *Oblation* for the Sins of others, but the " juſt *Puniſhment* of his own *Impiety*; and " his *Sufferings*, whatever they were, could " have no Relation to the *prophetick Meſ-* " *ſias*, becauſe he is repreſented *happy* and " glorious *throughout*, and therefore the " dolorous Deſcription in the Prophet " *Iſaiah*, muſt belong to ſome *other Per-* " *ſon*, (to *(d) Joſiah*, or *(e) Jeremiah*, for " Inſtance) whoſe Fate was very *hard*, or " perhaps to the *Jewiſh* Nation themſelves, " in their preſent State of Exile and Cap- " tivity: Much leſs could he be a *Prince*, " as ſome would make him, becauſe his " *mean* Condition and Appearance did but " badly comport with the *Splendor* and " *Magnificence*, wherewith the Prophets " do every where array that renowned " Perſon, who was come into the World. " But admitted there is ſome *Peculiarity* " in his *Kingdom*, and that the *Goſpel*, which " he made it his Buſineſs to preach, may " poſſibly be intended by it; yet, even in " this Senſe, where is that *vaſt Extent*, " and *Univerſality* of his *Dominion*, ſince " ſo many Countries are under Subjection " to others, and overſpread with *Infidelity*, " and *Barbariſm?* Where is the *Happineſs* " and *Tranquility*, that was to attend his " Reign, ſince *Wars and Rumours of Wars*, " Factions, and Fury, and Bloodſhed are " now more flagrant than ever, as if his " *Errand*, in Truth, had been *(f) not to* " *ſend Peace, but a Sword, and Diviſion* " amongſt us? The Succeſs indeed, that " his Goſpel met with, at its *firſt* ſetting " out, was very conſiderable; but for this, " the *Deſtruction* of the *Jewiſh* State, and " the caſual *Ceſſation* of Oracles much " about that Time, the *ſuffering* of thoſe " poor Bigots the *Martyrs*, the *charitable* " *Diſtribution* of Goods, the *Purity* of Mo- " rals, and *Simplicity* of Behaviour, re- " markable among the firſt Chriſtians, to- " gether with ſome other accidental Ad- " vantages, will ſufficiently account, with- " out the Suppoſition of any *Miracle* in " the Caſe."

Anſwer'd by ſhewing that the Prophets purpoſely *foretold the* Meſſias.

WHOEVER looks into the ſacred Records, will perceive, that, from the firſt Begin- ning, there was all along promiſed an *ex- traordinary* Perſon, diſtinguiſhed by a Mul- titude of *Titles*, and therefore called, *(g) the Seed of the Woman*; *the Seed*, (*h*) *in whom all the Families of the Earth, ſhould be bleſſed*; *(i) the* Shiloh, *to whom the gathering of the People ſhould be*; *(k) a Prophet like unto* Moſes, *(l) a Star out of* Jacob, (*m*) *a Rod out of the Stem of* Jeſſe, (*n*) *the righteous Branch, of* David, *(o) the Elect of God*, *(p) the Meſ- ſenger of the Covenant*, (*q*) *the* Emma- nuel, *(r) the* Meſſiah *the Prince*, *(s) the Deſire of all Nations*, and a (*t*) *Ruler in* Iſrael, *whoſe Goings-forth have been from everlaſting*, &c. Now, can any one ima- gine, that the Prophets, who wrote as they were *moved* by the Spirit of God, ſhould have ever beſtowed ſuch a Variety of De- nominations upon any Perſon; deſcribed every Circumſtance of his Birth, Life, and Death, recounted his *perſonal* Qualities, and pointed out the great *Offices*, wherein he was to be employed, and, yet in all this, have no Intent, that he, whom they thus ſignally diſtinguiſhed, by others ſhould be *remarked:* Or that the *Jews*, for whoſe Information they wrote, *(u) to whom per- tain'd the Covenant, and the Promiſes*, and to whom this eminent Perſon was in ſo near a Degree to be related, ſhould, when they read of him, be ſo far *unconcern'd*, as to

(*a*) Iſaac Chezuk Emunas, Chap. 1. (*b*) Mat. v. 17. (*c*) Deut. iv. 2. (*d*) 2 Chron. xxxv. 23, 24. (*e*) Vide Chron. xx. 32, and 38. (*f*) Mat. x. 34, and Luke xii. 51. (*g*) Gen. iii. 15. (*h*) Gen. xii. 3. (*i*) Gen. xlix. 10. (*k*) Deut. xviii. 15. (*l*) Numb xxiv. 17. (*m*) Iſa. xi. 1. (*n*) Jer. xxiii. 5. (*o*) Iſa. xlii. 1. (*p*) Mal. ii. 7. (*q*) Iſa. vii. 14. (*r*) Dan. xxvi. 25. (*s*) Hag. ii. 7. (*t*) Micah v. 2. (*u*) Rom. ix. 4.

conceive no pleaſing Hopes, nor entertain any longing Expectations of him: Or that we *Chriſtians*, when we come to compare the Writings of the Prophets and the Hiſtory of our Saviour's Life together, and to obſerve how exactly all Things, that had been foretold of the *Meſſias*, meet in our *Jeſus*, like Lines in a common *Center*, ſhould make any Scruple to infer, that we had really *found him, of whom* Moſes *and the Prophets did write*, (*a*) *Chriſt the Son of God, that was to come into the World.*

And that our Application *of their Prophecies is* true.

The Prophecies concerning the *Meſſias*, we own, are, many Times, *obſcure*, and, in ſome Caſes, admit of a doubtful Meaning; but ſtill we contend, (*b*) that our bleſſed Saviour, and his Apoſtles did not alledge any Prophecy out of the *Old* Teſtament, but in that very Senſe, which the *Jews* then received, and were perſuaded was intended by the Holy Ghoſt; and the Reaſon is, becauſe to do otherwiſe would have been a vain and fooliſh Attempt: It would have *expoſed* them to the Scorn of their Adverſaries, and proved highly *prejudicial* to the Cauſe, they pretended to maintain. Now, if the firſt Chriſtians expounded theſe Prophecies in a Senſe agreeable to the ancient *Jewiſh Synagogue*; as *theſe* beſt underſtood their own Language, and the Interpretation thereof, there is Reaſon to believe, that thoſe, who followed them therein, were not miſtaken in this Matter: But then we have a *ſurer* Teſtimony, that they were not miſtaken, but that they applied them according to the *primary* Intent of the Prophets, and that is this: — We all allow (*c*) that God knew the *Intention* of every Prophecy delivered by his Spirit; and therefore, when Perſons, who apply ſuch and ſuch Prophecies to the *Meſſias*, give the beſt Proof, that poſſibly can be given, that they are ſent by God, and act and ſpeak by his Commiſſion, God himſelf muſt be underſtood to make this *Application*. The Authority of the Expoſition muſt, in ſuch a Caſe, be *equal* to that of the *Prophecy*, becauſe that there could not be a better Proof of the Prophet's being ſent from God, than what the *Expoſitor* gives of his divine Miſſion. And therefore if our Saviour and his Apoſtles have interpreted the Prophecies concerning the *Meſſias* (as 'tis certain they have many) in the ſame Manner, that we contend for, it cannot be denied, but that our *Application*, as well as their *Conſtruction* of them, muſt neceſſarily be *true*.

That the Expectation of him is not a Novel Conceit.

A great Deſtitution of Records, we know, there was in the *Jewiſh Church*, a long Time before our Lord's Coming. The *Spirit of Prophecy* had ceaſed, and the Perſons, whoſe *Books* compleated the *Canon* of their Scripture, had been dead four Hundred Years at leaſt, before the Preaching of our Saviour; and therefore how the People, in theſe intermediate Ages, were affected with the Expectation of a *Meſſias*, we cannot determine: But, (*d*) ſince all Writers, about our Saviour's Time, make mention of it, without the leaſt Intimation of its *Novelty*, or aſſigning any *Author*, from whom it was *derived*, or any *Date* of its Commencement, this is a fair Preſumption, that the *Riſe* of it was much older, and beyond the Memory of that Time; and ſince this Expectation was profeſſedly founded on the *prophetick* Writings, the Expoſition of theſe Writings, from which it aroſe, muſt have been as old, as the Expectation, and may therefore, very probably, be thought to have deſcended down from the *prophetick* Age, though it was more * generally attended to near the Time of *Jeſus*.

And the Reaſon of the Baptiſt's Meſſage to our Saviour.

In the Time of *Jeſus*, (*e*) *John the Baptiſt* had diſclaim'd all Pretenſions to his being the *Meſſias*, and made it his Buſineſs, both in *publick* and *private*, to diſpoſe the *Jews* in general, and his own Diſciples in particular, to believe, reverence, and accept of *Jeſus*, as that eminent Perſon, *who was to come*; and therefore we ſhould offer great Injury to the *Character* of his renowned *Forerunner*, if we were to ſuppoſe his Conſtancy ſo *ſhaken*, or his Opinion and Belief ſo

(*a*) John. xi. 27. (*b*) *Stanhope's* Ser. at *Boyle's* Lect. (*c*) *Rogers's* Neceſſity of a divine Revelation. (*d*) Ibid in his Preface.

* The Expectation of a *Meſſias*, as founded on the Prophets, appears not only from the Goſpels, but from the oldeſt *Rabbinical* Books, the *Targums* of *Jonathan* and *Onkelos*; the *former* of which, according to the *Jews*, was wrote before Chriſt, and the *latter* ſoon after. 'Tis pretended indeed, that *theſe* are much *interpolated*; but if they are interpolated, it muſt have been done by the *Jews*, in whoſe Hands they were, for the *early* Chriſtians do not appear to have known them: And it is not probable, that *Jews* would interpolate *Acknowledgments*, ſo much in favour of *Chriſtianity*, as that any of the Prophecies, referred to by Chriſt and his Apoſtles, did really relate to the *Meſſias*. *Rogers's* Neceſſity of a divine Revelation in the Preface.

(*e*) *Stanhope's* Epiſt. and Goſp. Vol. I.

ſo *inconſiſtent* with themſelves, as to ſend to our Saviour any Meſſage of Enquiry for his own Satisfaction; but, as he perceived, that his own Diſciples envied the growing Glory of *Jeſus* by the Account which they gave him, *(a) he, that was with thee beyond* Jordan, *behold the ſame baptizeth, and all Men come to him*, he was minded to cure this malevolent Humour in them, and therefore diſpatched two of them to *Jeſus*, that, by ſeeing what he did, and hearing what Account he gave of himſelf, they might be convinced of his being the promiſed *Meſſias*, and ſo become reconciled to him, and diſpoſed to be turned over to their proper and better *Maſter*, now that himſelf was upon the Point of leaving the World.

The Meſſias not to be a temporal Prince.

(b) HE muſt increaſe, but I muſt decreaſe, is an Inference, that the *Baptiſt* might very well make, upon (*c*) *the Deſcent of the Holy Ghoſt*, which he ſaw, and the *Voice from Heaven*, which he heard, at the Time of our Lord's *Baptiſm*; but that he was come into the World, as a *temporal* Prince, a *national Saviour*, and *Deliverer* of the *Jews*, one, who was to bring their Enemies under Subjection, and raiſe himſelf and Empire upon the Ruins of other Kingdoms, of this he had not the leaſt Intimation. Great and glorious Things indeed are ſaid of the Kingdom of *Chriſt*; but then the *Figures*, by which it is deſcribed, are too *pompous*, to belong to any *earthly* Prince in a *literal* Senſe. (*d*) *Behold the Days come, ſaith the Lord, that I will raiſe unto* David *a righteous Branch, and a King ſhall reign and proſper. — And this is his Name, whereby he ſhall be called, the Lord our Righteouſneſs. (e) Of the Increaſe of his Government and Peace there ſhall be no End, upon the Throne of* David, *and upon his Kingdom, to order it, and to eſtabliſh it with Judgment and with Juſtice, from henceforth even for ever. (f) For his Dominion is an everlaſting Dominion, which ſhall not paſs away, and his Kingdom, that which ſhall not be deſtroy'd.* (*g*) Now can any one imagine, that theſe *lofty* Expreſſions are to be underſtood of a mere *human* Prince, *frail* and *mortal*, like ourſelves, and ruling over the Nation of the *Jews* in a *ſecular* Way? The very *Names* and Titles of this Prince beſpeak ſome Perſon, far enough *above* the Rank of Man, and deſign'd to govern his People in a *Way*, much ſuperior to that of human *Polities*. He is ſtiled the *mighty God, and the Lord our Righteouſneſs*; and if ſo, he can, no doubt, rule his Subjects in a *God-like* Manner, (without a *perſonal* Reſidence among them upon Earth, without *publiſhing Edicts*, and *threatening* Penalties upon Offenders, as temporal Princes are forced to do) by having the Diſpoſal of all Events, and a ſecret Influence over the Hearts and Minds of Men. *His Dominion is an everlaſting Dominion, of his Government there ſhall be no End*, and his Kingdom is to be univerſal, *over all People, Nations, and Languages for ever:* Does this ſound like the Kingdom of a *temporal* Prince upon Earth? Of a *mere Man*, circumſcribed in Exiſtence by a few Years, and yet ſubduing the *whole Globe* by his Arms, and reigning over it *for ever?* Theſe Ideas can befit none, but the great *Redeemer* of Mankind, *(h) who, for the Joy that was ſet before him, endur'd the Croſs, and is now ſet down at the Right Hand of the Throne of God*, (*i*) *far above all Principality and Power*, and whoſe Kingdom is not terminated (as all *ſecular* Dominions are) by the Age of Man, or the Exiſtence of the World, but is ſtrictly *eternal*, under a *King immortal*, under an *univerſal* Monarch, who will give his *faithful Subjects* hereafter ſuch an inconceivable Meaſure of Joy and Felicity, as will anſwer all the pompous *Deſcriptions*, that we meet with in the Prophets.

Nor Deliverer of the Jews *only.*

THE Prophets, indeed, talk a great deal of the *Reſtoration* of the *Iſraelites*, and of the Reign of their King the *Meſſias*; that, at (*k*) *the Blowing of the great Trumpet, the* Jews *ſhall be gather'd from all Parts of the Earth, and return into their own Country*, and that, *(l) in Mount* Zion, *and in* Jeruſalem *ſhall the Lord of Hoſts reign before the Ancients glorioufly*, when *(m) all Kings ſhall fall down before him, and all Nations do him Service.* But this only verifies our Saviour's Obſervation, that *(n) Chriſt* ought, in the firſt Place, *to have ſuffered, and after that to enter into Glory.* (*o*) How grand and ſhining ſoever the Images may be, in which the Prince *Meſſias* is deſcribed on ſome Occaſions, in *others*, he

(*a*) John xi. 26. (*b*) John iii. 30. (*c*) Mat. iii. 16, 17. (*d*) Jer. xxiii. 5, 6. (*e*) Iſa. ix. 6. (*f*) Dan. vii. 7, &c. (*g*) *Chapman's* Euſebius, Vol. I. (*h*) Heb. xii. 2. (*i*) Eph. i. 21. (*k*) Iſa. xxvii. 13. and xi. 11, 12. (*l*) Iſa. xxiv. 23. (*m*) Pſal. lxxii. 11. (*n*) Luke xxiv. 26. (*o*) *Chapman's* Euſebius, Vol. I.

he is figured out under diſmal Circumſtances of *Diſgrace* and *Suffering*, which are the Character of his *firſt Advent*; nor is it, 'till after this *Tragedy* is over, that his *Power and great Glory* is to be manifeſted, and even the Time, when this ſhall be made viſible to the *Jews*, is left entirely undetermined by the Prophets.

But the common Saviour of all.

IT is to be obſerved of this *Meſſias* however, that he is to be the *common Saviour* of the World, and not of the *Jews* only; for *thus ſaith the Lord*, (*a*) *it is a light Thing, that thou ſhouldſt be my Servant, to raiſe up the Tribes of* Jacob, *and to reſtore the preſerved of* Iſrael: *I will alſo give thee for a Light to the Gentiles, that thou mayeſt be my Salvation unto the End of the Earth.* And, as his Buſineſs is, not to gain worldly Conqueſts, but only to *turn away Ungodlineſs from* Jacob, (*b*) *the Weapons of his Warfare are not carnal, but ſpiritual*, and the *Enemies*, whom, in due Time, he is to reduce, are not ſo properly *Gentiles*, or Strangers to the preſent *Jewiſh Polity*, as Adverſaries of any Kind, that oppoſe his Laws, and diſhonour and do deſpite to his faithful Servants and People, compoſed both of *Jews* and *Gentiles*, and united in one Body, the Church of Chriſt: For this is the Meaning of that Prophecy; (*c*) *the Envy of* Ephraim *ſhall depart, and the Adverſaries of* Judah *ſhall be cut off*; Ephraim *ſhall not envy* Judah, *and* Judah *ſhall not vex* Ephraim; *but they ſhall fly upon the Shoulders of the* Philiſtines *towards the Weſt; they ſhall ſpoil them of the Eaſt together, they ſhall lay their Hand upon* Edom *and* Moab, *and the Children of* Ammon *ſhall obey him.*

His Coming not retarded by the Sins *of the* Jews.

THE *Gentiles* indeed had as great Intereſt in the Coming of the *Meſſias* as the *Jews*: He was to be their *Light*, as well as the others *Glory:* And therefore, (*d*) as the Promiſe was made, before there was any ſuch Nation as the *Jews* in the World, even in the Days of *Adam*, the common Parent of Mankind, and, after that, to *Abraham*, and *that Seed*, in which, not the *Jews* only, but *all the Families of the Earth ſhould be bleſſed*, 'tis vain and ridiculous to ſuppoſe, that the *Sins* and *Impenitence* of an inconſiderable People, in Compariſon of the whole Univerſe, ſhould retard his Coming. It is a received Rule among the *Jews* themſelves, that (*e*) *whatever proceedeth out of the Mouth of the Lord for Good*, (though it be a *conditional* Promiſe) *by no Means will he recal.* The Good, which accrues to Mankind from an *univerſal* Saviour, is inconceivable; and as, in all the *Predictions*, which concern the *Time* of his Coming, there is no *Condition* annex'd, * the Wickedneſs of a People is ſo far from being any *Let* or Impediment to it, that the greater *that* is, the more it ſtands in need of a Cure: And therefore, as the Deſign of his Coming was to (*f*) *open a Fountain to the Houſe of* David *for Sin and Uncleanneſs*, the ſooner he came, the better; (*g*) unleſs it be reaſonable to *delay* the Uſe of a *Remedy*, merely becauſe the Diſeaſe is become *malignant.*

Nor to be towards the End *of the* World.

† *THE laſt Days*, we readily own, have a Re-

(*a*) Iſa. xlix. 6. (*b*) 2 Cor. x. 4. (*c*) Iſa. xi. 13, 14. (*d*) *Kidder's* Meſſiah. (*e*) *Maimonides's* Preface in Seder Zeraim.

* The *Jews*, before they were carried away captive into *Babylon*, were wicked enough in all Conſcience. They *ſacrificed* their Children to *Idols*, ſpoiled the *Widows* and *Orphans*, and *ſhed innocent Blood* in great Plenty, *&c.* with which their Prophets do every where upbraid them; and yet, (becauſe God had promiſed them) as ſoon as their *ſeventy* Years Captivity were expired, they returned to their own Land, ſo that their Sins, at that Time, did not fruſtrate the Promiſe of God; and what Sins they are now guilty of, ſo heinous and abominable, as to *obſtruct* the Coming of the *Meſſias*, we cannot ſee. Since their *Babyloniſh* Captivity, they utterly *deteſt* all Kinds of *Idolatry*; and, if they do not conform to the Precepts of their Law, they are to be excuſed, becauſe ſeveral of theſe Precepts are made *impracticable*, by Reaſon of their Abſence from the Land of *Canaan* and the Temple, to which they were annexed: The others they obſerve as well as the Nature of their Circumſtances will permit. They keep their *Sabbaths*, and other *Feſtivals*, as well as they can. They circumciſe their *Males*, wear their *Phylacteries*, and are not unmindful of many other *Rites* of their Law. What then is the Crime, that retards his Coming? *The Sin of their Forefathers, and the Idolatry of the golden Calf*, ſay they, which has always ſome Mixture in all their Calamities. But ſince the *Prophets*, who lived after the Times of that Idolatry, did not only predict the Coming of the *Meſſias*, but the preciſe *Time* likewiſe, when he ſhould appear, it would be calling their Authority in Queſtion to ſuppoſe, that they would have done this, if God had altered his Purpoſe of ſending the *Meſſias* upon the Account of the Idolatry of *their Forefathers*. *Grotius* of the Truth, *&c.* and *Kidder's* Demonſtration, Part. III.

(*f*) Zech. xiii. 1. (*g*) *Grotius* of the Truth of the Chriſtian Religion.

† The *Diviſion* of Time in the holy Scriptures is twofold, *with Reſpect to the Church*: The moſt remarkable Times are theſe *three*; 1ſt, the Time before the Law, from *Adam* to *Moſes*; 2dly, the Time under the Law,

a Relation to the Coming of the *Meſſias*; but that by this *Phraſe* cannot be meant a *Period* of Time very near the *Conſummation of all Things*, is evident, not only from the Confeſſion of thoſe *Jews*, who grant * ſome Thouſands of Years for the Continuance of *Chriſt's Kingdom* here on Earth, but from thoſe Scripture Prophecies, already cited and explained, which confine the Time of his Coming within the Bounds of the *Jewiſh Polity*, and the Standing of the *ſecond Temple*, in ſuch a Manner, that no Arts of Interpretation can evade them. 'Tis a poor and ſenſeleſs Subterfuge therefore of the *Jews*, to *procraſtinate* the Coming of the *Meſſias* (in whom they pretend that all their Hopes and Expectations are *center'd*) even to the *ultimate* Period of the World, when, at the ſame Time, they cannot but perceive, that their City, their *Sanctuary*, their Government, both *Civil* and *Eccleſiaſtical*, has been long ſince extinct; that *(a) they are without a King, and without a Prince, and without a Sacrifice, and without an Altar, and without an Ephod, and without a Teraphim*; and all their Affairs brought into ſuch a Confuſion, that their *Genealogies* are perplexed and loſt, (beyond the Poſſibility of a Retrieve) not only of the *reſt*, but even of *that Tribe*, from whence the *Meſſias* was to ſpring; ſo that, ſuppoſing Chriſt not yet come, they are in no Condition of knowing him, when he does come, becauſe not able to prove his *Deſcent*, agreeably to the Prophecies concerning him.

His fulfilling, and not deſtroying the moral Law.

THEY pretend indeed that our *Jeſus* could not be the true *Meſſias*, becauſe he made *Alterations* in their Law, which, according to them, is of *perpetual Obligation*. But what is their Law, that is of this perpetual Obligation? To ſtate this Queſtion rightly, we muſt obſerve, that the Laws, given by *Moſes*, were of ſeveral Kinds. (*b*) Some of them were of a *moral* Nature, *viz.* ſuch as concerned our Behaviour to God, to our Neighbour, and to ourſelves; and others of a *poſitive Inſtitution*, which were either *Ritual* and *Ceremonial*, reſpecting the *Jews* conſidered as a *Church*; or *Civil* and *Political*, reſpecting them as a *Commonwealth*. Now, as to the Precepts of a *moral* Nature, there is no Queſtion to be made, but that they were of an *eternal* Obligation, and, from this Conſideration it undoubtedly was, that our Saviour took ſuch Pains to *fulfil that Part of the Law*, not only by his own *Practice*, but by explaining it with greater *Clearneſs*, and enforcing it with ſtronger *Sanctions*, and ſo making it a more perfect *Rule* and *Motive* to Obedience, than he found it at his Coming. Nay not only ſo, but by preſcribing Rules for the Government of our *Paſſions*, for the ſuppreſſing our inordinate *Deſires*, for renouncing our neareſt *Relations*, and ſacrificing our very *Lives* for the Sake of Truth, for rejoicing in *Tribulations*, and putting up *Injuries*, for enlarging the Objects of our *Charity*, by loving Strangers, even Enemies, and doing all imaginable Good to all Mankind, he is ſuppoſed, by moſt *Expoſitors*, to have made conſiderable Additions to it. But now, as to the *Ritual* and *Political* Parts of the Law, he had not the like Regard, becauſe he knew, that there was no peculiar *Excellency* in them; Men might be *good* without them, and very *bad*, even when they did obey them.

His abrogating the ceremonial Law, *and why.*

HE knew, that, before the Inſtitution of the *Law*, Precepts were preſcribed to *Adam*, to *Noah*, and to *Abraham*, without the Impoſition of ſuch *Ceremonies*, as the *Jews* now contend for, and that all theſe *Patriarchs* ſerved God *acceptably* without them; and therefore he could not deviſe any Reaſon, why *that*, which was not *impoſed* from the *Beginning*, muſt be required unto the *End*, or why the Faithful of future Ages, (tho' releaſed from theſe *Obſervances*) might not alſo find the ſame Acceptance.

Law, from *Adam* to *Moſes*. 2dly, the Time under the Law, from *Moſes* to the Diſſolution of the *Jewiſh Polity*; and 3dly, the Times of the *Meſſias*. *With Reſpect to the World*, Time is divided according to the four great *Kingdoms*, which ſucceeded one another, the *Aſſyrian*, the *Perſian*, the *Grecian*, and the *Roman*, with this Reference and Reſpect, that, whatever fell out in the Time of the *Roman* Empire, might be ſaid to happen *in the laſt Days*. So that, according to this Diviſion, our Saviour, who was born in the Reign of *Auguſtus*, and baptiz'd in that of *Tiberius*, may be properly ſaid to come *in the laſt Days*; as likewiſe, in reſpect of the *Jewiſh* State, it was in *the laſt Days*, that he did appear; ſince, he lived in the very *Age*, when the Deſtruction of their City and Temple, and the Diſſolution of their *Polity*, happen'd. *Kidder*'s Demonſt. Part III.

* The *Jews* have a Tradition of one *Elias*, a famous Man among them, recorded in their *Talmud*, that *the World ſhall continue ſix Thouſand Years; two Thouſand of which ſhall be void and empty; two Thouſand Years under the Law, and the other two Thouſand, the Days of the Meſſias*; and therefore, ſince the firſt *four Thouſand* Years are expir'd above *ſeventeen Hundred* Years ago, the *Meſſias* muſt have been come a long while ſince. *Miller*'s Ch. Hiſt.

(*a*) Hoſea iii. 4. (*b*) *Kidder*'s Demonſtration, Part III.

He knew, that the Appointment of these *Ceremonies* was, in Oppoſition to the Cuſtoms, and Uſages of other Nations, and *(a)* to ſecure the *Iſraelites* from the *idolatrous* Cuſtoms and Worſhip of the *Zabians* in particular; and therefore, ſince the Rites and Worſhip, againſt which they were levelled, had long ceaſed, and were forgotten, as he was a Prophet ſent from God, he had an undoubted Right and Authority to abrogate thoſe Precepts, which were of no longer Uſe and Significance. He knew, that he was to introduce a *(b) new Covenant, not according to the Covenant that he made with their Forefathers, in the Days when he took them by the Hand to bring them out of the Land of* Egypt, *but a Covenant, that he would put in their inward Parts, and write in their Hearts*; and that this Covenant would neceſſarily ſuperſede the other, *(c) which ſtood only in Meats and Drinks, in divers Waſhings, and carnal Ordinances, impoſed on them, until the Time of the Reformation.* In ſhort, he knew, that *(d) the Law was* originally intended only as *a School-maſter to lead them to Chriſt*, and that therefore, when he himſelf was come in Perſon, there was no more occaſion for a *School-maſter*; no Neceſſity for *(e) being any longer under theſe weak and beggarly Elements:* The *Ritual* Injunctions then ceaſed to be uſeful; their End was ſerved, and they *expir'd* of Courſe.

The political, *Law* peculiar, *and* topical.

THE *political* Laws of the *Jews* related to them, and them only; nor did they concern even them any longer, than they continued a diſtinct Polity: But now, ſince they have, for ſo many Hundred Years, been diſpoſſeſſed of their Land, and ceaſed to be a *Commonwealth*, the Precepts of this Kind have naturally expired; for, if we will allow the *Providence* of God to be the beſt *Interpreter* of his written Word, he cannot more plainly ſignify the *Releaſe* of any Obligation, than by rendering the Diſcharge of it abſolutely impracticable. When therefore ſuch and ſuch Precepts of the Law are ſaid to be *perpetual*, the Meaning muſt be, that they are *limited* to a certain determinate Time, even as long as the *Jewiſh Polity* continues; for which Reaſon ſome have remark'd, that, to the *Precepts* of this Kind, which are ſaid to be *for ever*, there is generally this Limitation annexed, *(f) thro' their Generations, and all their Dwellings*; meaning, that their Obligation ſhould no longer ſubſiſt, than while they continued peaceably in the Country, where the Providence of God had placed them, and where they had an Opportunity of performing them with Conveniency. And, in like manner, we may obſerve, that the Injunction to the *Jews* of not *adding* or *diminiſhing* any *thing* from the Commandments, which God gave them, though it prohibits *them* from making any *Innovations* themſelves, cannot poſſibly lay any Reſtraint upon *God*, becauſe he has expreſly declared, that *(g)* he would *make a new Covenant*; would *(h) ſet up a Kingdom, that ſhould not be deſtroy'd*; *(i) bring in everlaſting Righteouſneſs*; *(k) create a new Heaven, and a new Earth, ſo that the former ſhould not be remember'd*; *(l) raiſe up another Prophet like unto* Moſes; *and put his Words in his Mouth, that he might ſpeak unto them all that he commanded him.*

And in what Senſe ſaid to be perpetual *and* unalterable.

The Nature of our Saviour's Miracles deſtructive of the Devil's Power

HAD not our Saviour been a *Prophet like unto Moſes*, to make Innovations in a Religion, that had been eſtabliſh'd by God, and confirm'd by *Signs and mighty Wonders*, had been the higheſt Arrogance and Preſumption imaginable; but ſince, upon all Occaſions, he prov'd his *Miſſion* to be undeniable, the Inference which the *Jewiſh Ruler* makes, is very natural, *(m) Rabbi, we know that thou art a Teacher ſent from God, for no Man can do thoſe Miracles, which thou doeſt, except God were with him. Nichodemus*, we ſee, did not queſtion the *Power*, by which he wrought ſuch amazing Deeds. He had no Suſpicion of *Trick* or *Artifice*, much leſs of *Enchantments*, or any *Diabolical Combination*, but acknowledg'd *the Finger of God* in what he did. *(n)* Our Saviour's Miracles indeed were ſo many Works of Mercy and Goodneſs; *Speech* to the Dumb, *Hearing* to the Deaf, *Eyes* to the Blind, *Limbs* to the Maimed, *Health* to the Sick, *Life* to the Dead, and *Releaſe* to Souls and Bodies held in Bondage by the Devil; theſe were the Acts, by which, at once, he both *manifeſted his Glory*, and Love to Mankind. But, *was it ever known* that the Devil did *open the Eyes of the Blind?* Is it in his Power, is it in his Inclination, to do Things

(a) Maimonides More Nevoch. Part 3. (b) Ier. xxxi. 32, 33. (c) Heb. ix. 10. (d) Gal. iii. 24.
(e) Gal. iv. 3. (f) Lev xxiii. 31. (g) Jer. xxxi. 31. (h) Dan. ii 42. (i) Dan. ix. 24.
(k) Iſa. lxv 17. (l) Deut. xviii. 15, 18. (m) John iii. 2. (n) *Stanhope's* Ser. at *Boyle's* Lect.

Things ſo aſtoniſhingly great, ſo exceedingly good? *(a) Every Kingdom, divided againſt itſelf, is brought to Deſolation, and every City or Houſe, divided againſt itſelf, ſhall not ſtand.* But our bleſſed Saviour, 'tis plain, acted by a Power quite *oppoſite* to that of the common Enemy of Mankind, when he *diſpoſſeſſed* evil Spirits, and forced them to *(b) confeſs, to intreat, to obey, and diſcover a Dread of him*; when (*c*) he detected and defeated the Treachery and *Sorceries of Simon* by one Apoſtle, and *(d) ſtruck* Elymas *with Blindneſs*, by another; when, by the Power of his Goſpel, he rooted out *Idolatry* and Superſtition, put the *Heathen Oracles* to Silence, and diſcountenanced all Manner of Wickedneſs and Impiety, which are the *Sinews* of the Kingdom of Darkneſs.

And done in a publick *Manner to prevent Suſpicion of* Colluſion.

HAD our Saviour's Miracles been done in *a Corner* indeed, there might then have been ſome Umbrage for Suſpicion; but when it is conſider'd, that many of theſe Things were tranſacted in the *Synagogues*, where whole Towns were aſſembled for divine Worſhip; in *Villages*, in *Streets*, in *Cities*, in *Places* of the moſt publick Concourſe; on *Sabbath-Days*, and when the *Paſſover* and other *Feſtivals* drew all, both far and near, together to the Celebration of them; and when it is conſider'd, that almoſt all of them were done in the Preſence of *Scribes*, of *Chief Prieſts*, of *Elders*, Perſons whoſe Office it was to diſtinguiſh between *true* and *counterfeit* Miracles, and who wanted not *Inclination* and *Subtlety* enough, to detect and expoſe him, had there been any *Impoſture*; we cannot but conclude, that, *on his Part*, there cou'd be no *Fallacy* or Colluſion; and the Multitudes, concern'd *on the other*, were too numerous, to have all their Senſes deluded, and themſelves deceiv'd by a *Scene*, that was purely *viſionary*, and had no Reality in it. If our Saviour's Miracles then were inconteſtably true, they certainly were the proper *Credentials* of his Commiſſion to make what Alterations in Religion he thought fit, and to ſuch, as aſk him, by *what Authority he did thoſe Things*, the Reply is deciſive, (*e*) *If I do not the Works, of my Father, believe me not; but if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the Works, for they bear Witneſs of me, that ye may know, and believe, that the Father is in me, and I in him.*

The Innocence *of his Life, and* how *he came to be put to Death by the* Jews.

THE only Caſe, wherein Miracles are of no *Validity* in the Atteſtation of the *Commiſſion* of any Prophet, is, *(f)* his attempting thereby *to draw us aſide* from the Worſhip of the true God, into the heinous Sin of *Idolatry*; as the *Immorality* indeed of any Pretender to *Revelation* is a *ſhrewd* Sign of his being an *Impoſtor*. But now our Saviour was ſo far from teaching the Worſhip of falſe Gods, that he, and his Apoſtles do, every where, conſtantly forbid it, and expreſly enjoin all the Acts, both of *external* and *internal* Homage and Veneration to be paid to the *Supreme Majeſty* of Heaven only. As the Love of God, and a *Delight to do his* Will was the great impulſive Motive of all his Actions, *ſo he went about doing good*; but, in this he gain'd no *Wealth*, deſir'd no *Applauſe*, affected no *Dominion*, but was ſo perfect a Pattern of Humility and Meekneſs, of Innocence and Peaceableneſs, of Heavenly-mindedneſs and Contempt of the World, that we may juſtly wonder, how he came to fall under the *Diſpleaſure* of the *Jewiſh* Nation to ſuch a Degree, as to be ſentenced to a cruel and ignominious Death, but that, we have their *own* (*g*) *Cotemporary Hiſtorian* aſſerting, that, at this Time, not only the common People, but their *Rulers*, and Magiſtrates were ſtrangely corrupted; that their *Council* was generally *choſen by the Will of great Men*; that even the *Dignity of their High Prieſt's Office was become annual, and venal*; *and that* Jeruſalem, *in ſhort, was ſo abominably wicked, (h) that had the* Romans *delay'd to come againſt it, it would have been ſwallow'd up by an Earthquake, drowned by a Deluge, or conſumed by Fire from Heaven, like* Sodom *and* Gomorrah; *ſo* that, our Admiration may be leſs, that Men, ſo far degenerated, *ſwell'd* with Pride, and whoſe Avarice and Ambition were ſo *unſatiable*, ſhould be enrag'd at the Sight of one, (*i*) *whoſe Life was not like other Men's, and his Ways of another Faſhion; who upbraided them with their offending the Law, and objected, to their Infamy, the Tranſgreſſions of their Education.* It is to be obſerved however, that, notwithſtanding all their Accuſations againſt him, (*k*) *Strangers* pronounced him a *righteous Perſon*, the *Judge*, who

(*a*) Mat. xii. 25. (*b*) Luke iv. 34, 41. and viii. 28, 31. (*c*) Acts viii. 18, *&c.* (*d*) Acts xiii. 11. (*e*) John x. 37, 38. (*f*) Deut. xiii. (*g*) *Joſephus* Lib. 14. Cap. 9. Cap. 3. 6. (*h*) De Bello Lib. 18. Lib. 6 Cap. 5. (*i*) Wiſdom. ii. 15, 12. (*k*) *Kidder*'s Demonſt. Lib. 1.

who tried him, declared him *innocent*; the *Wretch*, who betrayed him, *hanged himſelf* for Grief; and his very *Enemies* were forced to make uſe of falſe and incoherent Witneſſes, of loud Clamours, and ſpecious Pretences of *Cæſar*'s Friendſhip, to procure his Condemnation.

His Death, a Sacrifice for Sin, *to which the* Prophecy *in* Iſaiah *is only* applicable.

(a) SUCH an High Prieſt became us, who was holy, harmleſs, undefiled, ſeparate from Sinners, who needeth not daily (as the High Prieſts under the Law) to offer up Sacrifice, firſt for his own Sins, and then for the Peoples, but this he did once, when he offer'd up himſelf, and ſo *(b) by his own Blood enter'd into the holy Place, having obtained eternal Redemption for us.* And indeed, if our Saviour's Innocence anſwer'd the Predictions, that were made of the *Meſſias*, in that famous *fifty-third Chaper of* Iſaiah, *the bearing our Griefs, and carrying our Sorrows, the being wounded for our Tranſgreſſions, and bruiſed for our Iniquities, the Chaſtiſement of our Peace, which was upon him, the Stripes, wherewith we were healed, and the Offering he made of his Soul for our Sin*, (which denote another Perſon ſubſtituted in our Room, and can only belong to the ſaid *Meſſias)* are properly applicable to none, but our *Jeſus*. For could it be ſaid of the Death of *Joſiah*, that it had in it the Virtue of an *Atonement*, or Expiation to avert the divine Vengeance from his Subjects, when it left them expos'd to the Ravages of the *Chaldeans*, who, not many Years after, led them away captive into *Babylon?* Or could it be ſaid of the *Sufferings* of *Jeremiah*, (for we do not read that he ended his Life by *Violence*) that they were a Means of appeaſing the Wrath of God, or averting his *Indignation from Tranſgreſſors?* Much leſs then can it be ſaid of the preſent Captivity and Exile of the *Jews*, that they ſuffer without any *Fault* or Demerit of their own; that their Calamities are available to the Expiation of the Sins of other People; that they *(c) ſee the Succeſs* and Efficacy of them, *in the Pardon and Juſtification of many*, and obſerve this *Pleaſure (d) of the Lord to proſper in their Hand.* But now, *(e)* upon the *Chriſtian Scheme*, there is an *Unity* of Character, which runs through the *whole*, and every Part of the Propheſy is applicable to the Sufferings of our *Redeemer*, who gave himſelf to die, as a *Propitiatory Sacrifice* for the Sins of Mankind, that all thoſe, who *receive him by Faith*, may have the *Guilt* of them ſo far obliterated, as to be reſcued from the *Power* and *Dominion* of them here, and hereafter from their *Puniſhment*.

His Regal Office, *and how far he exerted it at his* firſt Advent.

ONE great Miſtake in the *Jews*, when they interpret Scripture Prophecies, is, that they ſuffer the *Glare* and *Figure* of a *King* ſo far to blind their Eyes, as to *overlook* the other two Offices, for which the *Meſſias* was to come into the World. As a *Prophet*, he was to make a full Declaration of God's Will to Mankind; and as a *Prieſt*, who was appointed by God to *ſanctify the People by the Sacrifice of his own Blood*, he was of Neceſſity to *die:* Though therefore he was all along a *King*, yet the Adminiſtration of his *Regal Office* could not ſucceed, until the two former were diſcharged, becauſe, in the Predictions concerning the *Meſſias*, his *Inauguration* into *that* is expreſly mentioned, as the *Reward* of his Fidelity and Sufferings; *(f)* and therefore to cavil and find Fault, that the *Regal Office* of Chriſt was not exerciſed in ſo *conſpicuous* a Manner, as the *other two*, at his *firſt Coming*, nor all the Predictions concerning it ſo *diſtinctly*, and *punctually* fulfill'd, is to *miſunderſtand* the Prophets, to *diſturb* the Order of Things, and to *confound* the two *Advents*, which both Reaſon and Scripture have taught us to *diſtinguiſh*. At our Saviour's firſt *Advent*, he was undoubtedly a *King*, but, as he was chiefly then employed in the two *inferior* Offices, which requir'd his *Humiliation* and *Abaſement*, his *Regal* Title lay *dormant*, as it were, until he ſhould have a proper Opportunity of aſſuming it. Mean Time, he contented himſelf, by the Power of his Goſpel, and the Operations of his bleſſed Spirit, to erect his Kingdom in Men's Hearts; by the *Direction* of his Laws, to preſcribe their Duty, and order their Conduct; and by the *Diſcipline* of his Grace, to extinguiſh the Love of Sin, and *(g) to bring every Thought into Captivity to the Obedience* of God. Nor did he fail ſo far to exert the *external* Part of his *Regal Office*, *(h) as to blot out the Hand-Writing of Ordinances, that was againſt us; (i) through Death to deſtroy him, who had the Power of Death, that is the Devil*; and, *(k) having ſpoiled Principalities and Powers, to make a Shew of*

(a) Heb. vii. 26, 27. *(b)* Heb. ix. 12. *(c)* Iſa. liii. 11. *(d)* Iſa. liii. 10. *(e) Berriman*'s Ser. at *Boyle*'s Lect. *(f) Stanhope*'s Ser. at *Boyle*'s Lect. *(g)* 2 Cor. x. 5. *(h)* Col. ii. 14. *(i)* Heb. i. 14. *(k)* Col. ii. 15.

of them openly, triumphing over them on his Croſs. A *Conqueſt* gain'd, not by ſpilling the Blood of others, but by ſhedding his own, and a *Trophy*, to which ten thouſand thouſand Battles won, and as many Kingdoms reduced by the Sword, admit of no Compariſon!

As well as what is to follow.

THIS was the firſt Diſplay of his *Regal* Power, which was followed with his glorious Reſurrection, his triumphant Aſcenſion, his Seſſion, in our human Nature, at God's *Right Hand*, and his Government of the Body the Church, *whereof he is Head*; and which, in God's good appointed Time, is farther to be followed with the *Extent* of his Empire over the whole World, with an overflowing Bleſſing of Peace and Tranquility, with the utter *Deſtruction* of all his Enemies, and with the perpetual *Duration* of his Dominion: For, how meanly ſoever ſome may think of a deſpiſed *crucified* Man, yet there is nothing ſo glorioufly great, that may not moſt reaſonably be expected from this very Man, *(a) when declared to be the Son of God with Power, according to the Spirit of Holineſs, by the Reſurrection from the Dead.*

To which Nations unconverted, *and in* War, *are no* valid *Objection.*

IN the mean Time, it is no valid Objection againſt our Lord's *Regal Power, that the Fulneſs of the Gentiles is not yet come in*, but many Nations ſtill lie buried in *Turkiſh* or in *Pagan* Ignorance, ſince the *Converſion* of theſe to the Chriſtian Faith is an Event yet to come, and what we have the divine Veracity for our Security, that it will come, *though (b) it is not for us to know the Times, or the Seaſons, which the Father has put in his own Power.* And, in like manner, if the World be not as yet brought to ſuch a peaceable Temper, as to hinder *Nation from lifting up Sword againſt Nation*, this can be no juſt Exception to *Jeſus*, or his Religion, becauſe theſe Predictions may ſtill be accompliſhed, before the Expiration of that Period of Time, wherein it is decreed, that this ſhall come to paſs. When that Decree is to take Place, we have no Foundation for Conjecture: This only we are taught by the *Prophet*, that the Love of Virtue muſt prevail, and become more *general*, than it is at preſent, before we can hope for any ſuch Thing; For, *(c) when Judgment ſhall dwell in the Wilderneſs, and Righteouſneſs remain in the fruitful Field, then*, and not till then, *the Work of Righteouſneſs ſhall be Peace, and the Effect of Righteouſneſs, Quietneſs, and Aſſurance for ever: Then ſhall the People of God dwell in a peaceable Habitation, in ſure Dwellings, and in quiet Reſting-Places.*

Becauſe he has made ſufficient Proviſion *for* Peace.

THE Truth is, our bleſſed Saviour, who is juſtly ſtiled *the Prince of Peace*, both in his Life and Doctrine, ſet forth nothing, but what had a proper Tendency to beget and promote Unity, and good Agreement in the World. By his own *Example*, in leading an innocent and harmleſs, an uſeful and profitable Life, in being humble and lowly in Heart, patient and contented with his State, ſedulous for the Good of others, and negligent of his own Welfare, he recommended thoſe Virtues, which naturally endear Mankind to each other. By the *Principles* of his Religion, (*d*) *we are one Body in Chriſt, and every one Members one of another*: To us *(e) there is one Hope, one Lord, one Faith, one Baptiſm, one God and Father of all*; which, if rightly conſidered, muſt be ſtrong Inducements, (*f*) *to keep the Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace*; and, by the *Precepts* of it, we are required (*g*) *to follow after the Things, which make for Peace; to be perfectly joined together in the ſame Mind, and in the ſame Judgment*; and to practiſe the Duties of Meekneſs and Patience, of Love and Beneficence, of Mercy and Tender-heartedneſs, *forbearing one another, and forgiving one another*, which, if duly practiſed, cannot fail of turning the World into *Harmony* and Concord. Such ample Proviſion has our Saviour made for the Quiet and Tranquility of Mankind, if they would but attend to his Doctrines!

And in what Senſe he may be ſaid to have ſent a Sword on Earth.

(*h*) *PEACE I leave with you*, (ſays he to his Diſciples, a little before his Departure from them) *my Peace I give unto you; not as the World giveth, give I unto you; let not your Heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid:* The Reaſon of which Exhortation is the *Warning*, which he had given them of the *Oppoſition*, and ill Uſage, they ſhould meet with, when they ſet about the Work of propagating his Goſpel; that *(i) they ſhould be delivered up to the Councils, be ſcourged in Synagogues, and brought before Kings and Governors*; (*k*) *ſhould be hated of all Men for his Name's Sake*, and purſued with ſuch Malice and unrelenting Cruelty, that (*l*) *whoever*

(*a*) Rom. i. 4. (*b*) Acts. i. 7. (*c*) Iſa. xxxi. 16, 17. (*d*) Rom. xii. 5. (*e*) Eph. iv. 4, &c. (*f*) Eph. iv. 3. (*g*) Rom. xiv. 19. (*h*) John xiv. 27. (*i*) Mat. x. 17, 18. (*k*) Ver. 22. (*l*) John xvi. 2.

ever ſhould kill them, would think he did God Service; whereupon he ſubjoins, (*a*) *Think not that I came to ſend Peace on Earth, I came not to ſend Peace, but a Sword*; meaning, not that the *Intent* and *Purpoſe* of his Coming was to do *ſo*, but that, in the *Event*, and *Conſequence* of Things, it *would be* ſo, *i. e.* the Rage and Exaſperation, which Unbelievers would fall into upon the Preaching of the Chriſtian Religion, would be exceſſive, and enough to diſſolve all the Ties of *Conſanguinity*; to make a Brother deliver his Brother, the Father his Child, and Children *riſe up againſt their Parents, and cauſe them to be put to Death:* Where our Saviour plainly alludes to that Paſſage in the Prophet, (*b*) *The Son ſhall diſhonour his Father, and the Daughter riſe up againſt her Mother, the Daughter-in-Law againſt her Mother-in-Law, and a Man's Enemies ſhall be thoſe of his own Houſe.*

The Succeſs of the Goſpel miraculous, *notwithſtanding ſome* Incidents, *that might* facilitate *it.*

SINCE therefore the Oppoſition to the Preachers of the Goſpel, at their firſt ſetting out, was ſo very *violent*, to what Cauſe can we impute the wonderful Succeſs of it, but to (*c*) *that Demonſtration of the Spirit and of Power*, which did every where go along with it? (*d*) *The Deſtruction of the Jewiſh State* indeed added to the Number of Chriſtian *Converts*, when it happened; but it did not happen, 'till near *forty Years* after the Death of Chriſt, and, by that Time, Chriſtianity was ſtrong enough of itſelf, and needed no *Aids*. *The Ceſſation of their Oracles*, about the Time of promulging the Goſpel, was a ſurpriſing Event to the *Heathens* themſelves, and might have been of great Service, had the true Cauſe of it been known; but when *Plutarch*, in his famous Diſcourſe upon that Subject, makes mention of *many*, he never once hints at the *true* Cauſe, which was the *Coming* of Chriſt. *The Blood of Martyrs* is uſually ſtiled the *Seed of the Church*; but how? Not certainly by alluring Men to the Profeſſion of Chriſtianity, at the Time *when* theſe Martyrs ſuffered, but by diſpoſing them to embrace it *afterwards*, in better and more peaceable Times; but then, before this *Motive* could have any conſiderable Force, the Goſpel had ſpread, and ſettled itſelf every where. *The charitable Diſtribution* of the Goods of the firſt Chriſtians might be ſome Temptation to thoſe, that were miſerably *poor*; but People of better Circumſtances could not be influenced by that *Motive*, nor could it be any great Inducement even to the *meaner* Sort, ſince the ſtrict *Rules*, they were to live by, and the *ſore Perſecutions*, they were to undergo, would be of more Force to *deter*, than the other would be to *allure* them. Laſtly, *the Purity of Chriſtian Morals*, and the anſwerable Lives of Chriſtian *Converts* might naturally lead Men to *admire*, and value the Doctrine of Chriſt, but by no means to come under the *Yoke* of it; for, though moſt Men have an Eſteem for ſtrict *Rules*, and ſtrict *Livers*, yet few care to practiſe the *one*, or imitate the *other*. Upon the whole therefore it appears, that, though theſe *Incidents* might, in a *natural* Way, contribute ſomewhat, either to the planting, or ſpreading of the Goſpel; yet all of them, put together, could not have done the *thouſandth* Part of the Work, that is allotted them: And therefore, to reſolve the Succeſs of the Goſpel into a *Conſpiracy of ſecond Cauſes*, without any Regard to the *firſt*, tends, only to ſhew us, how ſtrong an Inclination there is in ſome Men's Minds to *Infidelity*, when ſuch vain *Suggeſtions*, and trifling Pretences can induce them to entertain it.

(*a*) Mat. x. 34. (*b*) Micah vii. 6. (*c*) 1 Cor. ii. 4. (*d*) Bp *Atterbury*'s Ser. Vol. I.

The

DISSERTATION VII.

Of the Converſion of the Jews *to the* CHRISTIAN FAITH.

The Reality of ſuch a Call *and* Converſion, *from the Prophets.*

THAT the *Jewiſh* Nation, however now diſperſed over the Face of the whole Earth, *aliens* in every State and Kingdom where they live, and, on many Occaſions, violently perſecuted, diſtreſs'd, * and maſſacred; however now under the manifeſt Diſpleaſure of Almighty God, who *(a) has blinded their Minds*, and *(b) given them the Spirit of Slumber*, and not of *(c) Repentance to the acknowledging of the Truth*, ſhall ſtill, before the Concluſion of the World, be reſtored to the *divine* Favour, re-inſtated in their *ancient* Country, and received into the *Boſom* of Chriſt's *Catholick* Church; this is an *Event*, whereof we have the beſt Aſſurance, that the general Voice of the Prophets, all predicting the ſame Thing, can poſſibly give us. For when we find *the Strength of* Iſrael thus promiſing his People: *(d) As I have ſworn, that the Waters of* Noah *ſhould no more go over the Earth, ſo I have ſworn, that I would not be wroth with thee, or rebuke thee* any more; *for the Mountains ſhall depart, and the Hills be removed, but my Kindneſs ſhall not depart from thee, neither ſhall the Covenant of my Peace be removed:* And therefore *(e) fear not thou, O my Servant* Jacob, *neither be diſmayed, O* Iſrael, *for I will ſave thee from afar, and thy Seed from the Land of their Captivity: (f) Violence ſhall no more be heard in thy Land, Waſting nor Deſtruction within thy Borders, but thou ſhalt call thy Walls Salvation, and thy Gates Praiſe.* When we find him repeating it ſo often, (g) *I will bring again the Captivity of* Jacob, *and have Mercy upon the whole Houſe of* Iſrael: *(h) I will ſave my Flock, and they ſhall no more be a Prey: They ſhall no more be a Prey to the Heathen, neither ſhall the Beaſts of the Land devour them:* For *(i) I will bring them into their own Land, and (k) ſo plant them upon it, that they ſhall no more be pulled up. (l) Their Sun ſhall no more go down, neither ſhall their Moon withdraw itſelf, for the Lord ſhall be their everlaſting Light, and their God their Glory.* When we find him thus foretelling their Converſion; *(m) In that Day there ſhall be a Fountain opened to the Houſe*

* To give you one Story for all: In the Reign of the famous *Abas*, Sophi of *Perſia*, the *Jews*, having acquired vaſt Wealth by impoveriſhing the Natives of the Country, came to be *offenſive* to the State. The Sophi therefore, being minded to take Vengeance of them, but, at the ſame Time, willing to conceal his Intention, called before him their *Rabbies*, and chief Doctors, and having queſtioned them about ſome Paſſages in their *Law*, what Opinion they had of *Jeſus*, what of *Mahomet*, and when they expected their *Meſſias* to appear, *&c.* he demanded of them, at laſt, to aſſign the Time of his Coming, and told them withal, that, if they *falſified* their Word, and impoſed on him in this Matter, they were all the *Sons of Death*, ſhould be certainly deſtroyed, and have their Goods confiſcated. Within *ſeventy Years*, they told him, according to their Books, and Prophecies, the *Meſſias* would infallibly appear: Whereupon the Emperor cauſed it to be recorded, in the Form of a *ſolemn* Stipulation between him, and theſe Doctors in behalf of the People, that, in caſe there was no News of the *Meſſias* within the ſeventy Years aſſigned, the *Jews* ſhould either turn *Mahometans*, or their whole Nation, throughout all *Perſia*, be utterly deſtroyed; but that, if he really did appear within that Period, then ſhould the *Emperor* himſelf become a *Jew*, and make all his Subjects the ſame. This *Inſtrument* however was not minded, 'till the Reign of the ſecond *Abas*, who, finding it among the Records of his Palace, called together his Council, and adviſed with them what to do upon this Occaſion. At that Time there was a Rumour of a certain *Meſſias*, named *Sabatai Sevi*, who, about the Year 1666, began to make his Appearance in *Turkey*, and was mightily followed by the People of that Country. This, and the *Jews* Avarice, ſo influenced the *Sophi*, and his Council, that they immediately concluded upon their Deſtruction; and reſolving that *this wicked Generation of Impoſtors, and Oppreſſors of the People* (as they call them) ſhould no longer be endured, iſſued out a *Proclamation* to *maſſacre* them all, and ſeize on their Subſtance, unleſs immediately they turned to the *Mahometan* Belief; which accordingly was executed with the utmoſt *Barbarity*, the People not ſparing Man, Woman, or Child, but ſuch as renounced their Religion, and, for ſome Years, continuing the *Carnage* through all the vaſt Territories of *Perſia*, until they had quite deſtroyed them. *Kidder*'s Meſſias, Part III.

(*a*) 2 Cor. iii. 14. (*b*) Rom. xi. 8. (*c*) 2 Tim. ii. 25. (*d*) Iſa. liv. 9, 10. (*e*) Jer. xxx. 10. (*f*) Iſa. lx. 18. (*g*) Ezek. xlix. 25. (*h*) Ezek. xxxiv. 22, *&c.* (*i*) Ezek. xxxvi. 24. (*k*) Amos ix. 15. (*l*) Iſa. Iſa. lx. 19. (*m*) Zech. xiii. 1.

Houſe of David, *and to the Inhabitants of* Jeruſalem, *for Sin and for Uncleanneſs:* (*a*) *Then will I ſprinkle clean Water upon them, and they ſhall be clean from all their Filthineſs: I will take away the ſtony Heart, and give them an Heart of Fleſh, and my Spirit will I put within them, and cauſe them to walk in my Statutes:* (*b*) *My Sanctuary alſo will I ſet up in the midſt of them, and my Tabernacle ſhall be with them for ever;* (*c*) and I will appoint *one Shepherd over them, and he ſhall feed them, even my Servant* David; *he ſhall feed them, and he ſhall be their Shepherd, and I the Lord will be their God, and my Servant* David *a Prince among them.*

WHEN we read theſe, and many more Prophecies of the like Nature, I ſay, we cannot but conclude, that they certainly import a *Reſtoration*, and *Converſion* of the *Jews*, much more *general*, than their Return from their Captivity in *Babylon*; much more *univerſal*, than their embracing *Chriſtianity*, in the Times of the *Apoſtles*, and ſome ſubſequent Ages of the Church. Some of theſe Paſſages perhaps may relate to this *former* Captivity; but, ſince the Time of *that*, and their Settlement again in their native Country, *the Kindneſs of God has departed from them*, and *his Covenant of Peace been removed*; *Violence has been heard in their Land*; *Waſting and Deſtruction within their Border*; their *Sanctuary and Tabernacle* have been conſumed, and they ſufficiently *made a Prey to the Heathen*. Some of them likewiſe may have Reſpect to the *Conqueſts*, which the *Goſpel* made among them, at its firſt *Propagation*, after the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, in the Reign of *Conſtantine the Great*, and perhaps in the *Beginning* of the *Reformation*; but what is all this to a *national* Converſion, (*d*) *to God's aſſembling the Outcaſts of* Iſrael, *and gathering together the Diſperſed of* Judah *from* Aſſyria, *and from* Egypt, *and from* Pathros, *and from* Cuſh, *and from* Elam, *and from* Shinar, *and from* Hamah, *from the Iſlands of the Sea, and from the four Corners of the Earth?* And indeed, their being diſperſed *to the four Corners of the Earth*, and yet, for theſe many Hundred Years, preſerving themſelves *diſtinct* and *ſeparate*, without any *Mixture* with other Nations, among whom they have lived, to me is no ſmall Argument, that the Providence of God, which ſeems to be ſo *viſible* in preſerving this national Diſtinction between them and other People, will, in the Time, that his infinite Wiſdom has prefixed, put to his Hand likewiſe to bring about a *national* and glorious Reformation among them; (*e*) when *ten Men, out of all Languages of the Nations, ſhall take hold of the Skirt of him, that is a* Jew, *ſaying, we will go with you, for we have heard that God is with you.*

And from the 11th Chapter of the Epiſtle to the Romans *explain'd.*

ST. *Paul*, in the eleventh Chapter of his Epiſtle to the *Romans*, has given us, not only Aſſurance of the *Certainty* of this Event, but, in ſome meaſure, an Indication likewiſe of the *Manner*, and *Time* of its being accompliſhed: But, for our better underſtanding the Method of his Reaſoning upon this weighty Subject, we muſt obſerve, that, at the firſt promulging of the Goſpel, the *Converts* to Chriſtianity were entirely *Jews*; that, for *twelve* Years after our Saviour's *Aſcent*, the Apoſtles (as an ancient *Tradition* informs us) tarried in *Judæa*, and in the neighbouring Countries, preaching the *Doctrine of Reconciliation* to their Countrymen only; and that, as (*f*) *Cornelius* was one of the firſt *Proſelytes* of another *Sort*, his Converſion was a Thing ſo *unaccountable* to the reſt of the Apoſtles, that St. *Peter*, who was chiefly concerned in it, was obliged, in his own Vindication, to give a particular Account of the Occaſion of it.

ST. *Paul*, when he was converted to the Faith, had a particular *Revelation*, (*g*) *that the* Gentiles *ſhould be fellow Heirs* with the *Jews, of the ſame Body, and Partakers of the ſame Promiſes in Chriſt by the Goſpel*; and therefore, when he came to *Antioch*, in *Piſidia*, as there were *Gentiles*, as well as *Jews*, in the Synagogue on the *Sabbath-Day*, he preached to both alike, but not with the ſame Succeſs: (*h*) *The* Gentiles, *as many as were ordained to eternal Life, believ'd*; but (*i*) *the* Jews, *being filled with Envy, contradicted* what he ſaid, *and blaſphem'd*, inſomuch that he was conſtrain'd to tell them plainly, (*k*) *It was neceſſary that the Word of God ſhould be firſt ſpoken to you, but ſince you have thruſt it*

(*a*) Ezek. xxxvi. 25, &c. (*b*) Ezek. xxxvii. 26, 27. (*c*) Ezek. xxxiv. 23, 24. (*d*) Iſa. xi. 11, 12. (*e*) Zech. viii. 23. (*f*) Acts x. and xi. (*g*) Eph. iii. 6. (*h*) Acts xiii. 48. (*i*) Ver. 45. (*k*) Ver. 46.

it from you, and judge yourſelves not worthy of everlaſting Life, lo, we turn from you to the Gentiles. After that (*a*) *the Salvation of God was thus ſent to the* Gentiles, and they received it gladly; the Goſpel made a *prodigious* Progreſs amongſt them, and carried along with it whole *Towns*, whole *Cities*, whole Countries, wherever the Apoſtles erected the *Standard* of the *Croſs*, while a total *Stagnation* was put to its Advancement among the *Jews*, who not (*b*) *only rejected the Counſel of God againſt themſelves*, but turn'd, ſome of them *Apoſtates* from the Faith, and all, that were *unconverted*, became its moſt inveterate Enemies and Perſecutors, (*c*) *ſtirring up the* Gentiles, *and making their Minds ill-affected againſt their Brethren*, though, in ſo doing, (*d*) *they filled up their Sins*, and brought the Wrath of God *upon them to the uttermoſt*.

In this *languiſhing* Condition was the *Goſpel* of Chriſt among the *Jews*, and in this *flouriſhing* one among the *Gentiles*, when St. *Paul* wrote his Epiſtle to the *Romans*, wherein, (*e*) having expreſs'd * *his exceeding great Deſire* for the Welfare *of his Brethren, his Kinſmen, according to the Fleſh*, and made it (*f*) the Subject of his ardent Prayer *to God, that* (notwithſtanding their preſent Rejection) they might recover from their Unbelief, *and be ſaved*; he proceeds to ſhew, that their *Obduration* could not be *abſolute* and *final*: And, for a Foundation, he aſks this Queſtion; (*g*) *Has God caſt away his People*, i. e. utterly and without Exception? To which he anſwers in the *Negative*; for, though it cannot be denied, but that many of them are *harden'd* in their Infidelity, *yet* (*h*) *there is, at this preſent Time*, ſays he, (ſpeaking of the *Converts*, that were made in the Beginning of *Chriſtianity*) *a Remnant of them, that believe according to the Election of Grace*; and from this *Remnant* he infers, that the whole Nation will not finally be rejected; (*i*) † *for if the firſt Fruit be holy, the Lump is alſo holy, and if the Root be holy, ſo are the Branches.* The ſame Thing he infers from the *Promiſes* of God made to *Abraham* and his Poſterity, which are *immutable*; (*k*) *for hath God caſt away his People, whom he foreknew*, or pre-elected? By no Means, (*l*) *for the Gifts and Calling of God are without Repentance*; and therefore, *though, as concerning the Goſpel, they are Enemies*, ſays he, *yet as touching the Election*, or as the elect People of God, *they are beloved for their Father's Sake.* And, having eſtabliſh'd theſe *Poſitions*, he proceeds to inform us, for what Reaſons it is, that God has ſuffer'd this *Unbelief* to reſt upon them, *viz.* that, (*m*) *through their Fall Salvation might come unto the* Gentiles, *for to provoke them to Jealouſy*, or an Emulation of their Faith, and that their *Recovery* might be more conſpicuous: For, (*n*) *if the Diminution of them* (as he argues) *be the Riches of the* Gentiles, *and the Caſting away of them be the*

(*a*) Acts xxviii. 28. (*b*) Luke vii. 30. (*c*) Acts xiv. 2. (*d*) 1 Theſſ. ii. 16. (*e*) Rom. ix. 3.

* The Apoſtle's Words are theſe, — *I could wiſh that myſelf were accurſed from Chriſt for my Brethren*, &c. but what does he mean by *wiſhing himſelf accurſed from Chriſt?* Some Divines, of the *myſtick* Way, have thought it reaſonable for a Man to ſubmit himſelf even to *everlaſting* Miſery, to ſerve the Ends of God's *Glory*, and the general *Good* of Mankind; but the Thought is *ſhocking*, and the Thing impracticable. No Man can do it: Neither is it rational or pious, either to ſuppoſe that God could admit of ſo *abſurd* a Thing, or be pleaſed with a Wiſh ſo wild and extravagant. The more judicious Divines therefore, being ſenſible of this, have either thought the *Whole* to be a ſtrong *hyperbolical* Expreſſion, which ought not to be *literally* interpreted, or obſerving, that the Apoſtle does not ſay, *I do wiſh*, but *I could wiſh*, meaning, *if ſuch a Wiſh were proper to be made*, they reſolve the Paſſage into this Senſe: — "If it would avail to make ſo great a Multitude happy, "I could even wiſh ſo great a Bleſſing to my Brethren, though it were with the Loſs of my own Happineſs." It is to be obſerved however that the Words, which we render *accurſed*, often ſignify no more, than *being devoted to a temporal Death*, and, what we render *from Chriſt*, may equally ſignify *after Chriſt*, or *according to Chriſt's Example*; and ſo the whole Sentence will run thus; — *I could be content*, nay, I ſhould rejoice, *to be made a Sacrifice myſelf, (as Chriſt himſelf has been before me) for my Brethren, my Kinſmen according to the Fleſh.* So that the *literal* Senſe of the Apoſtle, in the Paſſage now before us, is no more than this — that he wiſhed to be *devoted* even to Death, for the eternal Salvation of his Brethren, the *Jews*, in like manner, as Chriſt, his great Leader, had been *devoted* before him. *Whitby*'s Comment on Rom. Chap. ix. and *Waterland*'s Ser. Vol. II.

(*f*) Rom. x. 1. (*g*) Rom. xi. 1. (*h*) Ver. 6. (*i*) Ver. 16.

† The Force of the Apoſtle's Reaſoning is this: — "As the whole *Lump*, or Maſs of Corn, under the "*Law*, was hallowed by the *Heave-Offering* of the *firſt Fruits*, Numb. xv. 20. and, as the *Branches* par- "take of the *Vigour* and Virtues of the Root, from which they ſpring; ſo the great Body of the *Jews* are ac- "cepted in *Abraham*, and ſanctified by their Deſcent from him: They cannot therefore be finally rejected, "but ſhall, in God's good Time, be admitted again to the Bleſſings, which belong to that ſacred *Alliance*." Bp *Atterbury*'s Ser. Vol. II.

(*k*) Rom xi. 2. (*l*) Ver. 29, 28. (*m*) Ver. 11. (*n*) Ver. 12. 15.

Reconciling of the World, what ſhall the Receiving of them be, but even as *Life*, or a Reſurrection from the Dead? And from thence he concludes, that a Time will come, when they ſhall be received into Favour again, and be made Partakers of the Privileges and Benefits of the Goſpel: For (*a*) *I would not, Brethren, that ye ſhould be ignorant of this Myſtery, viz.* the intended Calling of the now-rejected *Jews) or that Blindneſs in Part is happened to* Iſrael, 'till the Time of *the Fulneſs of the* Gentiles *be come in*, and then it ſhall be for ever done away.

The Manner, *in which it will be effected.*

THIS is the Force of the *Apoſtle*'s Reaſoning: And now, if we lay the Scripture *Prophecies* together in their proper *Series* and Order, we may perceive, that the *Method*, in which this great Affair is to be tranſacted, may poſſibly be this: — (*b*) That, * by a wonderful *Effuſion* of his holy Spirit upon the *Jews*, ſuch as was on the Day of *Pentecoſt*, but far more *extenſive*, he will, in a moſt ſurpriſing Manner, *open the Eyes* of this blinded People, and powerfully convince them of the Error and Wickedneſs of their *Infidelity*; and that they thereupon, with one Heart, and one Mind, ſhall *return* to the Lord, and, with *penitent* Tears, waſh off the *Guilt* of their Saviour's *Blood*, which hath hitherto deſcended upon them, from one Generation to another: For this is the Language of the Prophets; (*c*) *Hear, O* Jacob *my Servant, and* Iſrael, *whom I have choſen, thus ſaith the Lord, I will pour my Spirit upon thy Seed, and my Bleſſing upon thy Offspring, and one ſhall ſay, I am the Lord's, and another ſhall call himſelf by the Name of* Jacob; *and another ſhall ſubſcribe with his Hand unto the Lord, and ſurname himſelf by the Name of* Iſrael; for, (*d*) *I will bring forth my Servant the* Branch, *and remove the Iniquity of the Land in one Day.* (*e*) A Nation ſhall be born *at once*; and, *as ſoon as* Zion *travaileth, ſhe ſhall bring forth her Children:* (*f*) *The Spirit of Grace and Supplication will I pour upon her, and ſhe ſhall look upon him, whom ſhe hath pierced, and mourn for him, as one mourneth for an only Son*; and (*g*) *I will take out of her Hand the Cup of Trembling, even the Dregs of the Cup of my Fury, and ſhe ſhall no more drink of it again.*

THE *Jews*, being thus converted by the Power of *Chriſt*, ſhall, under his victorious *Banner*, and, by the Aſſiſtance of (*h*) ſome *European* Powers, be conducted into the *holy Land*, and being repoſſeſſed of their ancient native Country, ſhall ſet about † the Rebuilding of the City of *Jeruſalem* in a *ſplendid* Manner, and a glorious Church for the true Worſhip of God; when a mighty Hoſt of *Eaſtern Infidels* ſhall on a ſudden *invade* them, and reduce them to an *imminent* Danger of utter *Deſolation*, until our bleſſed Saviour ſhall *make bare his Almighty Arm*, and, in a moſt miraculous Manner, confound and ſcatter theſe *Invaders*, and crown his *Iſrael* with Victory and Triumph: For in this Strain the Prophets proceed; (*i*) *Fear not, for I am with thee. I will bring my Sons from far, and my Daughters from the Ends of*

(*a*) Rom. xi. 25. (*b*) *Scot*'s Mediator.

* The learned Mr. *Mede* conjectures, that, beſides this *miraculous* Effuſion of the Holy Ghoſt, there ſhall be a *glorious* Appearance of Chriſt from Heaven: For his Notion is, that the Converſion of St. *Paul*, the great Perſecutor of the *Chriſtian* Church, was a *Type* of the Converſion of the *Jews*; and therefore, as *that* was effected by a glorious Apparition of Chriſt, ſhewing himſelf in a viſible Form from Heaven, ſo will *this* in ſome meaſure, be occaſioned by a bright and conſpicuous Manifeſtation of the ſame divine Perſon, in the different *Regions* of Heaven, to the different *Quarters* of the World, where any great Number of *Jews* do inhabit: But as it happened to St. *Paul*, who was the only Perſon, that ſaw our Lord, Acts ix. 7, 17. ſo this Appearance ſhall be made viſible to the *Jews* only. And for this he ſeems to have ſome Countenance from the Words of our Saviour, who being aſk'd, *what ſhall be the Sign of the End of the World?* Matt xxiv. 3. anſwers, in the 30th Verſe, *Then ſhall appear the Sign of the Son of Man in Heaven, and then ſhall all the Tribes of the Earth mourn, and they ſhall ſee the Son of Man coming in the Clouds of Heaven with Power and great Glory.* *Mede*'s Works, Page 161, 167.

(*c*) Iſa. xliv. 1, &c. (*d*) Zech. iii. 8, 9. (*e*) Iſa. lxvi. 8. (*f*) Zech. xii. 10. (*g*) Iſa. li. 22. (*h*) *Kidder*'s Meſſias, Part III.

† Jeruſalem *ſhall be built with Sapphires*, ſays *Tobit, and Emeralds, and precious Stone: Thy Walls, and Towers, and Battlements with pure Gold; and the Streets of* Jeruſalem *ſhall be pav'd with Beryl, and Carbuncle, and Stones of Ophir*; *and they* (meaning the *Jews*) *ſhall return from all Places of their Captivity, and build up* Jeruſalem *gloriouſly, and the Houſe of God ſhall be built in it for ever with a glorious Building*, Chap. xiii. 16, &c. Chap. xiv. 5. Nay, and in the Prophet *Iſaiah*, God promiſes *to beautify the Place of his Sanctuary, the Houſe of his Glory, and to make the Place of his Feet glorious*, Chap. vi. 7, 13. which ſome of the Ancients took in a *literal* Senſe, though others wrote againſt them, deriding their *golden Jeruſalem* upon Earth, and the Reſtoration of the ancient Temple; as indeed ſuch a Temple, as was that of the *Jews*, ſuch a *Sanctuary*, and ſuch a Service, as was us'd therein, cannot be ſuitable to the moſt glorious and ſplendid Times of the *Chriſtian Church* *Whitby* on the *Millennium*.

(*i*) Iſa. xliii. 5, 6.

of the Earth; *for* (*a*) *I have ſaid to* Jeruſalem, *thou ſhalt be inhabited, and to the Cities of* Judah, *ye ſhall be built, and I will raiſe up the decayed Places thereof.* (*b*) *Joy and Gladneſs ſhall be found therein, Thanksgiving and the Voice of Melody.* (*c*) *But, in the Time, when I ſhall bring again the Captivity of* Judah *and* Jeruſalem, *I will alſo gather the Nations, and bring them down into the Valley of* Jehoſaphat, *and plead with them there for my People.* (*d*) *In that Day I will ſmite every Horſe with Aſtoniſhment, and every Rider with Madneſs*; *and I will make* Jeruſalem *a Cup of Trembling to all the People, that lay Siege againſt her*; (*e*) *and the Multitude of all the Nations, that fight againſt* Ariel, *even all that fight againſt her, and her Munition, and that diſtreſs her, ſhall be as a Dream of a Night Viſion.*

Upon the hearing of theſe *miraculous* Events, which ſhall ſpread far and wide, even to the utmoſt Ends of the Earth, the *Heathen* World ſhall be convinced of the Truth of Chriſtianity; ſhall relinquiſh their wicked and idolatrous Cuſtoms; and, betaking themſelves to the true Worſhip of the God of Heaven, ſhall be incorporated into the *Jewiſh* Church, now become *Chriſtian*, and deſervedly called *the Mother of them all.* And now, all the World being converted to the Chriſtian Religion, and the Chriſtian Religion being reſtor'd to its *ancient* Purity, whatever remains of *Superſtition* and *Hereſy*, of *Vice* and *Immorality*, of *Strife* and *Contention*, ſhall be done away; and inſtead of them, the true *Faith*, the ſincere *Piety*, the unaffected *Virtue*, the *Peace*, and *Love*, and *Unanimity*, which Chriſtianity teaches and preſcribes, ſhall univerſally prevail, and in this happy and proſperous Condition, ſhall the Church, or Kingdom of Chriſt continue for a conſiderable Time; for theſe are the lofty Sentiments of the Prophets: (*f*) *Ariſe, ſhine, for thy Light is come, and the Glory of the Lord is riſen upon thee*; *for the Forces of the Gentiles ſhall come unto thee, therefore thy Gates ſhall be open continually; they ſhall not be ſhut Day or Night, that Men may bring unto thee the Sons of Strangers*; *and* (*g*) *they ſhall caſt their Idols of Silver, and their Idols of Gold, which they made to worſhip, to the Moles, and to the Bats*; (*h*) *for I will turn to the People a pure Language, that they may all call upon the Name of the Lord,* (*i*) *worſhip him every one from his Place, and ſerve him with one Conſent.* (*k*) *Rejoice ye therefore with* Jeruſalem, *and be glad with her, all ye that love her, that ye may ſuck, and be ſatisfied with the Breaſts of her Conſolation*; *that ye may be borne upon her Sides, and dandled upon her Knees*; *for God will extend Peace to her like a River, and the Glory of the* Gentiles *like a flowing Stream*; *and* (*l*) *this is the Name wherewith he ſhall be called, The Lord our Righteouſneſs.* (*m*) *No Lion ſhall be found in her, nor any ravenous Beaſt*: (*n*) *The Dragon, that old Serpent, who deceived the Nations, ſhall be bound, and caſt into the bottomleſs Pit, and thoſe, who have not worſhipped the Beaſt, nor received his Mark, ſhall live, and reign with Chriſt a* * *thouſand Years.*

And the Time when.

This ſeems to be the *Series*, in which that great Tranſaction is to be accompliſhed; and, as to the *Time* of it, we have no Intimation given us, but from that obſcure Paſſage in the *Revelation*, where (*o*) *the ſixth Angel poured out his Vial upon the great River* Euphrates, *and the Water thereof was dried up, that the Ways of the Kings of the Eaſt might be prepared*; for by *Euphrates* moſt Commentators underſtand the *Turkiſh Empire*, which extends itſelf on both Sides of that River, and, including the *Holy Land*, muſt in ſome manner, † by the Divine Providence, be deſtroy'd, before

(*a*) Iſa. xliv. 26. (*b*) Iſa. li. 3. (*c*) Joel iii. 1, 2. (*d*) Zech. xii. 4. 2. (*e*) Iſa. xxix. 7. (*f*) Iſa. lx. 1, &c. (*g*) Iſa. ii. 20 (*h*) Zeph. ii. 9. (*i*) Zeph. ii. 11. (*k*) Iſa. lx. 10, &c. (*l*) Jer. xxxiii. 16. (*m*) Iſa. xxxv. 9. (*n*) Rev. xx. 2, &c.

* *This Reign of a thouſand Years with Chriſt* is commonly called the *Millennium*, wherein the *Ancients* held, that, before the Concluſion of the World, the City and Temple of *Jeruſalem* were to be *new built*; that all the *Juſt* ſhould be *raiſed* from the Dead; that they ſhould fare deliciouſly; ſhould beget Children, live in great Peace and Plenty, and that *Jeſus Chriſt* ſhould then reign over them upon Earth. But all this proceeded from nothing, but a Miſtake of ſome Paſſages in that obſcure Book of the *Revelation*, which, when rightly underſtood, mean no more, than the *proſperous* Condition of the *Jews*, converted to Chriſtianity, and of the *Gentiles*, then *flowing in* to them, and *uniting* in one Church. *Whitby* on the *Millennium*.

(*o*) Rev. xvi. 12.

† By *Gog*, in the Prophet *Ezekiel*, Chap. xxxviii. and xxxix. and *Gog* and *Magog*, in the *Revelations*, Chap. xx. is generally underſtood the *Turkiſh* Empire; and, in what wonderful Manner it will be deſtroyed, when once it goes to War againſt the *Jews*, after their Reſtoration to their native Country, the Prophet has very elegantly deſcrib'd in theſe Words; —— *Therefore, Son of Man, propheſy, and ſay unto* Gog, *thus ſaith the*

fore the *Jews*, converted to Chriſtianity, can be in any Condition of returning to their *native* Country.

In order to their preſent *Converſion, what we may do.*

In the mean Time, leaving this great Event to Divine Providence, if we look upon the *Jews* in the Light, wherein St. *Paul* repreſents them, as God's peculiar People, to whom once (*a*) *belonged the Adoption, the Glory, the Covenant, the Giving of the Law, the Service of God, and the Promiſes*; who are Deſcendants *of the Fathers*, or Patriarchs, and of whom, *as concerning the Fleſh, Chriſt*, the promiſed *Meſſias*, *came*; we cannot but be deeply concern'd for their *Rejection*, and embrace all fitting Opportunities of endeavouring, as far as in us lies, the Converſion of a People, whoſe *Prejudices* recommend them to our *Pity*, as we are *Chriſtians*; and whoſe *Miſeries* call up our *Bowels*, as we are *Men*. And here we may be allowed, I hope, without any invidious Reflection, to put them in Remembrance of the *diſmal Circumſtances*, under which they labour, and have laboured for above theſe Sixteen Hundred Years; of the *Contempt* and Abhorrence they have undergone, not only from *Chriſtians* of all Sorts, but even from *Turks* and Heathens, ſo as to (*b*) *become* (in the prophetick Expreſſions of *Moſes*) *an Aſtoniſhment, a Proverb, and a By-word among all Nations, whither the Lord hath led them*; of the frequent *Oppreſſions* and *Exactions*, and the various Expulſions and *Maſſacres*, they have brought upon themſelves, by liſtening to *falſe Chriſts*, who, in ſeveral Ages of the World, ſince our Saviour's Coming, have appeared and ſeduced them into Ruin; of the *utter Impoſſibility* of their ſerving God according to the Tenour of their Religion, ſince their Temple, their Government, their Sacrifices, and other Rites and Ordinances are extinct; and of the *abſolute Neceſſity* of their lying under the Sentence of Condemnation, ſince they are in no Condition of performing (*c*) *all the Words of their Law*, and yet, without ſuch Performance, the Lord has threatened that *he will make their Plagues wonderful, and the Plagues of their Seed even great Plagues, and of long Continuance*. And now if it be aſked, why is all this come upon them? may it not reaſonably be ſuppoſed, for ſome heinous, crying, and national Sin; and what that Sin is, it beſt behoveth them to conſider. Every indifferent Spectator, to be ſure, who ſees their wide *Diſperſions*, and ſad *Sufferings*, can hardly forbear arguing after this Manner: "No Nation, from the Beginning of the "World, was ever puniſhed as this Na- "tion; and therefore if the Puniſhment of "Nations be for their *Sins*, ſome heinous "Acts muſt have been done by them, which "never was done by any other Nation: "And what ſhould that be, but the Effu- "ſion (*d*) of the Blood of *Jeſus*? That "Blood therefore, the Guilt of which pur- "ſues them, was the Blood of an innocent "Perſon, and not of an *Impoſtor*, the *Seal* "of the Doctrine which he publiſhed, and "the Evidence of his being what he af- "firmed himſelf to be, *the Son of God*." We may requeſt of them therefore, in all Seriouſneſs, that they would ſuſpend their inveterate *Prejudices*, and re-examine this *Queſtion*, depending between us and them (which is certainly one of the higheſt Importance to us both) with a little more Candour and Impartiality; (*e*) that they would lay aſide, for a little while, their *high Conceit* of the *Levitical* Rites and Inſtitutions, which now they cannot obſerve, and which God never deſign'd that they ſhould be of perpetual Obligation; their * *implicit* Belief of the Opinion of their *Superiors*, which makes

the Lord God: In that Day, when my People of Iſrael *dwelleth ſafely, ſhall thou not know? And thou ſhalt come from thy Place, out of the North Parts, thou, and many People with thee, all of them riding upon Horſes, a great Company, and a mighty Army: And thou ſhalt come up againſt my People* Iſrael, *as a Cloud to cover the Land. It ſhall be in the latter Days, and I will bring thee againſt my Land, that the Heathen may know me, when I ſhall be ſanctified in thee, O* Gog, *before their Eyes; for, it ſhall come to paſs, that, when* Gog *ſhall come up againſt the Land of* Iſrael, *my Fury ſhall come up in my Face; for, in my Jealouſy, and in the Fire of my Wrath, have I ſpoken; ſurely in that Day, there ſhall be a great Shaking in the Land of* Iſrael. ——— *For, I will call for a Sword againſt him throughout all my Mountains, ſaith the Lord God. Every Man's Sword ſhall be againſt his Brother: I will plead againſt him likewiſe with Peſtilence, and with Blood, and I will rain upon him, and upon his Bands, and upon the many People, that are with him, an overflowing Rain, and great Hail Stones, Fire, and Brimſtone, and ſo give him to the ravenous Birds of every Sort, and to the Beaſts of the Field, to be devoured. Thus will I magnify myſelf, and ſanctify myſelf, and I will be known in the Eyes of many Nations, and they ſhall know that I am the Lord.*

(*a*) Rom. ix. 4. (*b*) Deut. xxviii. 37. (*c*) Deut. xxviii. 58, 59. (*d*) Deut. xxviii. 58, 59. (*e*) *Kidder*'s Meſſias, Part II.

* In the Days of our bleſſed Saviour, the *Jews* erroneouſly thought themſelves bound to believe what their *Elders* did, and one great Reaſon why they rejected him, and his Doctrine, was, becauſe their *Superiors* did

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makes *Error* infinite, and obſtructs all *private* Enquiry; their *immoderate* Opinion of † the *Oral* or *Traditional Law*, which has no Foundation in *Scripture*; and their *eager* Attention to the Writings of ‡ their *Talmud*, which are made up of ‖ impious, fooliſh, and romantick *Stories*; and, when we have once brought them to this Temper, there may be ſome Room to convince them, — that, if they believe the *divine Legation* of *Moſes*, there is much more Reaſon to believe that of *Jeſus*; for, if *Moſes* be received as a *Prophet*, becauſe he wrought many and great Miracles; this *Evidence* is incomparably ſtronger for *Jeſus*, than for any Perſon, that God ever yet ſent into the World: If *Moſes* was believed becauſe he foretold *Events*, which accordingly came to paſs; we may appeal to the *Jews* themſelves, (*a*) whether the *Deſtruction* of their City and Temple, their *broken Polity*, their long *Diſperſion*, their *ſore* Calamities, their *mercileſs* Perſecutions, together with many more Predictions of as difficult a Nature, have not ſufficiently verified our Saviour's *Character* in this Reſpect: And, laſtly, if the *Purity* of the Precepts, which *Moſes* delivered, is enough to make good his Pretenſions; in this Reſpect we may venture to ſay, without Vanity, that our bleſſed Lord tranſcended every Lawgiver, that went before him.

What we may expect from them.

If our Reaſoning however can make no Impreſſion upon them, this we think we may, in Juſtice, require; — that they would not continue to form in the Minds of

the ſame: For, *have any of the Rulers or Phariſees believed on him?* was the Queſtion, that was put to the *Officers*, ſent to apprehend him, and who could not but ſay, *never Man ſpake, like this Man*, John vii. 46, 48. Now the Queſtion was not, whether their *great Men* believed on him? but whether, or no, he was *worthy* of Belief? To convince them of this, our Saviour refers them to *Moſes* and his *Works*; but the fooliſh *Jews* rejected him, becauſe their Elders had done ſo; and, in like manner, to this very Day, they tenaciouſly adhere to the Judgment of their *Foreſathers*, and ſome of them, upon this Account only, refuſe to accept of *Jeſus*, as their *Meſſias*; even as we are told of *one* of them, who, being urg'd with the Danger of obſtinately perſiſting in his *Judaiſm* after Means of Conviction, replied, "That he deſired to be in no better Condition, nor to "be thought wiſer, than the *wiſe Men* of his Nation had been; and that, if he was damn'd for his *Infidelity*, "ſo would *Maimonides*, *Raſhi*, and many other Elders be." So addicted are theſe People to their *wiſe Men*, that they will rather hazard their own Salvation, than lay aſide their *Prejudice*, and examine (as they ought to do) the Merits of the Cauſe depending between us. *Kidder's Meſſias*, Part II.

† The *Jews* pretend to a *Law*, given by God to *Moſes*, by him to the *Jews* his Contemporaries, and by them to ſucceeding Ages, from one Generation to another, which was not *written*, but delivered by Word of Mouth. This they call their *oral Law*. They make it a neceſſary *Expoſition* of their *written* Law, and have an equal, if not a greater Eſteem for it. How this Law was delivered, *Maimonides* takes upon him to acquaint us. He tells us, that, when God, on Mount *Sinai*, deliver'd the Law to *Moſes*, he gave him, at the ſame Time, the *Meaning* or *Interpretation* of it; that *Moſes*, upon his Return, went into his Tent, and calling *Aaron* to him, gave him the *written* Law, Precept by Precept, and afterwards the *Expoſition* of it, which was the *Oral Law*, in the ſame manner, that he had received it from God; that *Aaron*, being thus inſtructed, went to the Right Hand of *Moſes*, and there ſeated himſelf, and then his two Sons, *Eleazer* and *Ithamar*, came in; that, when to them *Moſes* had communicated what he had done to their Father, they retired, one to the Left Hand of *Moſes*, and the other to the Right Hand of *Aaron*, and then the *ſeventy Elders* came in; and that, *Moſes* having taught them in the ſame Manner, as he had done *Aaron*, and his Sons, ſuch of the *Multitude*, as were deſirous to know the Law of God, came in, and received the like Inſtruction from his Mouth: So that, upon the whole, ſays he, *Aaron* received this Law from *Moſes four Times*; his Sons *thrice*; the Elders *twice*; and the Multitude *once*, which was afterwards delivered to their *Succeſſors*, in the ſeveral Generations following, in the Manner, that he accounts for. But all this is mere *Fiction*, and the Fruit of his own Brain, without the leaſt Foundation, either in Scripture, or in any *authentic* Hiſtory for it. *Kidder's* Meſſias, Part. II. and *Prideaux's* Connect. Part II.

‡ The *Oral Law*, or Traditions of the *Jews*, which, in Proceſs of Time, *multiplied* to an exceſſive Degree, were at length, by *Judah*, commonly called *Hakkadoſh*, or the *Saint*, collected into one *Book*, which they call the *Miſhnah*; and this, as ſoon as it was made *publick*, was received with ſo great a Veneration, that moſt of their learned Men employed themſelves in making *Comments* on it. Theſe Comments they call the *Gemara*, that is the *Compliment*, becauſe by them the *Miſhnah* is fully *explained*, and the whole *traditionary* Doctrine of the Law, and their Religion, compleated. The *Miſhnah* therefore is the *Text*, and the *Gemara* the *Comment*; and both together make up what they call the *Talmud*, whereof there were two Sorts; one made by the *Jews* of *Judæa*, and therefore call'd the *Jeruſalem Talmud*; and the other, by the *Jews* of *Babylonia*, and therefore call'd the *Babyloniſh*, which, though it abounds with a Multitude of *ridiculous* Fables and Lies, is much more eſteem'd by all *modern Jews*, than the other. In this Book all, who now pretend to any Learning among them, place their Studies, and no one can be a *Maſter* in their *Schools*, or a *Teacher* in their *Synagogues*, who is not thoroughly acquainted with it. *Prideaux's* Connect. Part I.

(*a*) *Stanhope's* Ser. at *Boyle's* Lect.

‖ To give the Reader a Specimen of the many, that occur in the *Babyloniſh Talmud*: Therein we are told, —— *That God, to paſs away the Time, before the Creation of the Univerſe, when he was alone, employed himſelf in building divers Worlds, which he immediately deſtroyed, 'till, by different Eſſays, he had learnt at laſt to*

of their People an *Abhorrence*, and ſettled Antipathy againſt us, and our Doctrine. *Joſephus*, (if he be not miſtaken) accounts this a Practice, *(a)* directly contrary to the Inſtitution of *Moſes*, who makes it one of his Laws, — *that no Man ſhould blaſpheme the Gods, which other Cities received*; and therefore we cannot but *expect*, that, henceforward, they would forbear to *revile* the ſacred Name of *Jeſus* with Lies and Blaſphemies, not fit to be repeated; to curſe his Diſciples, under the Name of *Edomites*, in their publick Offices, or private Converſation; and to purſue ſuch *Converts*, as embrace the Chriſtian Faith, with * Malice, and Cruelty, and direful *Execrations*. Theſe Things are *wicked*, and *immoral* in their own Nature; a Breach of good *Manners*, as well as all *Religion*; a vile Return for the kind *Protection*, that the *Government* gives them; and what can be of no other Effect, than only to render their Minds more averſe to the Goſpel, and to provoke God to (*b*) *give them up to ſtrong Deluſions, that they may believe a Lie*, who take ſuch wicked Pains to preclude all *Acceſs*, and to *fortify* themſelves againſt *Conviction*.

And what our Behaviour towards them ſhould be.

BUT whatever they do, ſince it is our indiſpenſable Duty, our peculiar Glory, (*c*) to *love our Enemies, to bleſs thoſe that curſe us, and to pray for ſuch, as deſpitefully uſe us, and perſecute us*; whenever we enter into Conference with them, let us remember to (*d*) *put away from us all Bitterneſs, and Wrath, and Anger, and Clamour, and Evil-ſpeaking*; duly conſidering, that (*e*) *the Servant of the Lord muſt not ſtrive, but be gentle unto all Men, in Meekneſs inſtructing thoſe, that oppoſe themſelves, if God peradventure will give them Repentance to the acknowledging of the Truth.* With this View, we muſt endeavour to engage their Attention by our *Courteſy*; to ſoften their Paſſions, and conquer their Prejudices, by our *Charity*; and, by our *Arguments*, but eſpecially by our *Examples*, labour to win them over to their own Happineſs, and to reſtore them to that high *Place* in the Favour of God, from which they are ſo deplorably fallen.

DISPUTATION is not every Man's Province: *Few* are qualified to ſuſtain it with a proper *Sufficiency*; but *all* may live, ſo, as (*f*) *to give no Offence, either to the* Jews, *or to the* Gentiles, *or to the Church of God.* (*g*) A competent Skill, not only in the *Biblical* *make one as perfect, as this of ours.* Therein we are told, *That a certain* Rabbi, *having intreated the Devil to carry him to the Gates of Heaven, that he might ſee the Happineſs of the Saints, and ſo die with more Tranquility, the Devil granted his Requeſt, but the* Rabbi, *ſeeing the Gates of Heaven open, threw himſelf headlong in, ſwearing, that he would never come out again; ſo that God, who would not ſuffer him to be guilty of Perjury, was obliged to let him remain there, and the Devil, being thus trick'd, and impoſed on, was forced to ſneak away in great Confuſion.* Therein we are told of another *Rabbi*'s making a Voyage beyond Sea, *where he ſaw Angels cutting and ſawing Diamonds, and Saphires, for to build the Temple, and City of* Jeruſalem; of God's *mourning, becauſe he had ſuffered that City to be deſtroyed*; of his *daily Diligence in reading the Law*; and (what tranſcends all) of the great *Feaſt*, which he and his Angels are to have with the *Elect*, whereat will be ſerv'd up, *for the firſt Courſe*, the *Leviathan*, made on the firſt *Thurſday* of the Creation, and of ſo voracious an Appetite, that, every Day, it ſwallows *a Fiſh of three Miles long*; *for the ſecond*, the Bird *Jochna*, which once dropp'd an *Egg*, that broke down *three hundred Oak-Trees*, and *drowned ſixty Cities*; *for the third*, the *Behemoth*, made on the *Friday* of the Creation, and not deſtroyed in the Deluge of *Noah*; *for the fourth*, another *Leviathan*, made at the ſame Time with the former, but killed ſince the Creation, and ſalted; with other ſuch-like *groſs* Eatables: Whereat their *Liquor* ſhall be *Wine*, preſs'd by God, on the *ſixth* Day of the Creation; their *Deſert*, the Fruits of Paradiſe, and at laſt the *Fruit of the Tree of Life*; and then they ſhall *dance* merrily, and, as God will join with them in the Dance, they ſhall point with the Finger, and ſay, *Lo! this is our God, we have waited for him, and he will ſave us; this is the Lord, we have waited for him; we will be glad, and rejoice in his Salvation*, Iſa. xxv. 9. Theſe, and the like horrid, abſurd, and blaſphemous Things, are to be found in the *Talmud*, which abundantly ſhew, how miſerably they are deluded, who make it the *Rule* of their Faith, and how juſtly it is to be rejected. *Grotius* de Veritate, Lib. 5. *Moſes Marcus*'s Motives to leave the *Jewiſh* Rel. and *Miller*'s Converſion of the *Jews*.

(*a*) Antiq. Lib. 4. Cap. 8.

* All *Converts* to Chriſtianity the *Jews* do not only call by the opprobious Name of *Apoſtates*, but they teach, that every ſuch Apoſtate *ſhall have no Part in the World to come, and that his Sin ſhall never be forgiven to eternal Ages.* They *ſpit at him*; they refuſe *to eat and drink with him*; they call his *Children Baſtards, and his Wife polluted and defiled.* They *eſteem him as an Epicurean, and an Heretick; contemn him, and his Family, and decline all Affinities with them, be they never ſo wealthy.* They *curſe him three Times a Day, Morning, Noon, and Evening*, and, in this Curſe, they pray, that *he may be cut off from all Hope.* Him, *that kills* him, they *indemnify*, and affirm, *that he needs no Repentance, but is to be eſteem'd, as if he had brought an Oblation.* If, in his Life-time, any Evil befals him, they ſay, *Thus let the Enemies of the Lord periſh.* They *rejoice in his Ruin*; they *follow him with many Reproaches*; and, when he dies, they ſay of him, *The Name of the Wicked ſhall rot; and let his Name and Memory be blotted out. Woe be to him, and to his Soul. Woe be to his Father, and Mother, that conceived, and brought him up. Woe be to his Maſter, that taught him the Law*, &c. Wicked and inhuman Uſage this! and what deters many, no doubt, who are convinced of the Truth, from profeſſing the *Chriſtian Faith*. *Kidder*'s Meſſias, Part II.

(*b*) 2 Theſſ. ii. 11. (*c*) Matt. v. 44. (*d*) Eph. iv. 31. (*e*) 2 Tim. ii. 24, 25. (*f*) 1 Cor. x. 32. (*g*) *Kidder's* Meſſias, Part II.

Biblical Hebrew, but likewiſe in *Rabbinical* and *Talmudical* Learning, thereby to convince the *Jews* from the avowed Principles of their *ancient* wiſe Men, (for which they retain a profound Regard) is what falls to the Share of a very ſmall Number even of thoſe, that are reputed *learned* amongſt us; but learned, or unlearned, we may *(a) let our Light ſo ſhine before them*, that *they, ſeeing our good Works*, and thence conceiving a more favourable Opinion of our Religion, may not only *glorify* our common *Father, which is in Heaven*, but, *in the Day of their* Viſitation, be in a better Diſpoſition to receive that Faith, which works ſo good an *Effect*, (as they cannot but perceive) both in the *Temper* and *Manners* of its Profeſſors. But, however this proves, we have one Expedient more (which all *States* and Conditions of Men are equally capable of) in Reſerve for their Converſion, and that is, our *conſtant*, fervent Prayers to God, that he would be pleaſed *(b) to take from them all Ignorance, Hardneſs of Heart, and Contempt of his Word; and ſo fetch them home to his Flock, that they may be ſaved among the Remnant of the true* Iſraelites, *and be made one Fold, under one Shepherd*, Jeſus Chriſt *our Lord*. Amen.

SECT. III. His only Son.

The EXPOSITION.

In what peculiar Senſe Chriſt is call'd the Son of God.

AFTER the great and important *Office*, to which our bleſſed Saviour was appointed, we are next led to acknowledge the *Dignity* of his Perſon, and the near *Relation* he bears to God, in that he is his *only Son*. *(c) Angels* indeed, who are a ſuperior *Order* of Beings, *(d) Adam*, who was the firſt created of his Race, and (*e*) *thoſe*, who have received the *Spirit of Adoption*, are ſtiled the *Sons of God*, even (*f*) as all Mankind are denominated *his Offſpring*: But the *Filiation*, or *Sonſhip* intended in the *Creed*, has ſomething in it of a more *eminent* and exalted Nature, and intimates a certain *Peculiarity*, wherein the great Redeemer of the World is *the Son of God*, in ſuch a Way, and ſuch Manner, as never any other was, is, or can be.

HE himſelf indeed has a *Right* to this *Appellation* upon ſeveral Accounts: As he was, in a wonderful Manner, *conceiv'd*, in the bleſſed *Virgin* (*g*) by the Operation of the *Holy Ghoſt*; as he was *(h)* inveſted with an high *Commiſſion* by the ſpecial Deſignation of Almighty God; as he (*i*) was *raiſed* from *the Dead* by a divine *Efficacy*, and ſo introduced into a new State of Immortality; and as (*k*) he was *inveſted* with Power and Dignity next to the Father, *and given to be Head over all Things to the Church*: But, in all theſe Inſtances, there is no *Singularity*, no peculiar Excellency above others. The Creation of *Angels* out of Nothing, and perhaps of the *Protophaſt Adam*, was a Thing as *extraordinary*, as our Saviour's *Conception* in the Womb of a Virgin. Several Men, as well as he, have been promoted to ſuch *Honour*, and *Offices* of Authority, as have intitled them the *Children of the moſt high*. He indeed is the *firſt*, and *chief*, but not the *only Son of the Reſurrection*; for, together with him, *(l) many Bodies of Saints aroſe, and came out of their Graves*, as all ſhall do (*m*) at the general Summons; and, though (*n*) *he is appointed Heir of all Things, and has obtained a more excellent Name than others*, yet all, *who, (o) by patient Continuance in Well-doing, ſeek for Glory, and Honour, and Immortality*, ſhall be called (*p*) the Children of God, *and if Children, then Heirs, Heirs of God, and joint Heirs with* Chriſt: So that we muſt continue our *Search* a little farther, in order to find out this *peculiar*, this *diſtinguiſhing* Character, whereby, in a Manner *ſuperlative*, and *excluſive* of all other Beings, our Saviour is juſtly ſtil'd the *only Son of God*.

That the Meſſiah *was to be the* Son of God.

THAT the *Meſſias*, who, by the divine Appointment, was to come into the World,

(*a*) Matt. v. 16. (*b*) *Third Collect of Good Friday.* (*c*) Job xxxiv. 7. (*d*) Luke iii. 38. (*e*) Gal. iv. 5. (*f*) Acts xxxviii. 28. (*g*) Luke i. 35. (*h*) John x. 63. (*i*) Acts xiii. 33. (*k*) Eph. i. 26. (*l*) Matt. xxvii. 52, 53. (*m*) John v. 29. (*n*) Heb. i. 2, 4. (*o*) Rom. ii. 7. (*p*) Rom. viii. 17.

World, in order to redeem Mankind, was to be *the Son of God*, is plain from the Oracles of the *Old* Teſtament, wherein we read, (*a*) *the Lord hath ſaid unto me, thou art my Son, this Day have I begotten thee*; and again, (*b*) *He ſhall cry unto me, thou art my Father, my God, and the Rock of my Salvation; alſo I will make him my Firſt-born, higher than the Kings of the Earth*: And that this was the general *Perſuaſion*, which prevailed among the *Jews*, both learned and unlearned, inſomuch that *Meſſias* and the *Son of God* were Terms *convertible*, at the Time of our Saviour's Appearance, the *Confeſſion* of *Nathaniel*, (*c*) Rabbi, *thou art the Son of God, thou art the King of* Iſrael; the *Declaration* of *Martha*, (*d*) *Lord I believe that thou art Chriſt, the Son of God*; and the *Atteſtation* of St. *Peter*, in the Name of his Brethren, the Apoſtles, (*e*) *We believe, and are ſure, that thou art that Chriſt, the Son of the living God*, are a ſufficient Teſtimony.

Our Saviour, when he came, aſſum'd that Title.

THAT our bleſſed Saviour, when he appeared in the World, *aſſum'd* to himſelf this Title and Character, (*f*) his *Anſwer* to his Mother, when ſhe found him in the *Temple*; (*g*) his *promiſing* his Apoſtles the Gift of the Holy Ghoſt; (*h*) his *Interceſſion* for them, before his Apprehenſion; (*i*) his *Supplication* for himſelf, in the mournful *Garden*; (*k*) his free *Confeſſion*, before the Judgment-Seat of *Pilate*; (*l*) his *commendatory* Prayer, at the Time of his *Expiration*, and (*m*) the *Commiſſion*, he gave his Diſciples, at the Time of his *Aſcenſion*, are a plain Demonſtration.

Which the Apoſtles, and inſpired Writers, always gave him.

That by the *Apoſtles*, and other inſpired Writers, the Appellation of *the Son of God* was conſtantly aſcribed to him, St. *Peter* ſhews, by telling the People, that (*n*) *the God of their Fathers had glorified his Son Jeſus, whom they deliver'd up*; St. *Paul* teſtifies, by exhorting the *Coloſſians*, (*o*) *to give Thanks unto God, who hath tranſlated us into the Kingdom of his dear Son*; St. *John* evinces, by aſſuring us, that (*p*) *God ſo loved the World, that he ſent his only-begotten Son, not to condemn the World*; and the Author to the *Hebrews*, by aſſerting that (*q*) *God, who at ſundry Times, and in divers Manners, ſpake, in Time paſt, unto the Fathers by the Prophets, has, in the laſt Days, ſpoken to us by his Son, whom he hath appointed Heir of all Things*: To ſay nothing of the *Declaration*, (*r*) which the Angel makes at his *Annunciation*; nothing, of the *Voice* from Heaven, (*s*) both at his *Baptiſm*, and *Tranſfiguration*; nothing, of the *Confeſſion* of his bittereſt Enemies the *Jews*; and of the *Teſtimony*, which even the Devils themſelves gave of this Matter, (*t*) *crying out, and ſaying, what have we to do with thee Jeſus, thou Son of God?* Innumerable indeed are the Inſtances, where our bleſſed Lord is characteris'd under this Title; and, (*u*) yet the *Ancients* are *unanimous*, that this Title was given purely in reſpect to his *divine* Nature, and that, to call him *the Son*, the *only Son*, the *only-begotten Son* of God, *&c.* was, * in their Opinion, to declare him to be of the ſame *Nature* and Subſtance with God the Father, and as truly God, as the Son of any Man is truly Man.

And which the divine Attributes.

(*x*) THE Scripture Notion of a Perſon, that is truly God, and ought to be received as ſuch, includes in it Power and Might irreſiſtible, perfect Knowledge, and conſummate Wiſdom, Eternity, Immutability, Omniſcience, Omnipreſence, creative Powers, Supremacy, Independency, and neceſſary Exiſtence. When therefore we find our bleſſed Saviour affirming, that (*y*) *all Power was given unto him both in Heaven and Earth*, and, accordingly, giving his Diſciples a Controul and (*z*) *Authority over all Devils, and unclean Spirits, to caſt them out*; this muſt certainly denote his *Omnipotence*; when we find it recorded of him, that,

(*a*) Pſal. ii. 7. (*b*) Pſal. lxxxix. 26, 27. (*c*) John i. 49. (*d*) John xi. 27. (*e*) John vi. 69. (*f*) Luke ii. 49. (*g*) John xiv. 16. (*h*) John xvii. 24. (*i*) Matt. xxvi. 39. (*k*) Matt. xxvi. 63, 64. (*l*) Luke xxiii. 46. (*m*) Matt. xxvi. 19. (*n*) Acts ii. 13. (*o*) Col. ii. 12, 13. (*p*) John iii. 16, 17. (*q*) Heb. i 1, 2. (*r*) Luke i. 35. (*s*) Matt. iii. 17. and 2 Pet. ii. 17. (*t*) Matt. viii. 29. (*u*) *Waterland*'s Defence of the Divinity of *Jeſus Chriſt*.

* To this Purpoſe *Juſtin Martyr* ſays of Chriſt, that *he, being the Firſt-begotten of God, is God*, and *that he alone is truly God's Son*, alluding to the *Sameneſs* of Kind, which a Son has with his Father, Apol. 1. *For, as Nature herſelf has ordain'd, that we ſhould believe him to be a Man, who is* of *Man*; *ſo the ſame Nature preſcribes, that we ſhould believe him to be God, who is* of *God*, Navat. Cap 2. *When therefore we ſay, God the Father, and God the Son, we do not ſay two, but one, becauſe the Father cannot be without the Son, nor can the Son be divided from the Father, for as much as a Father cannot be denominated without a Son, nor a Son be generated without a Father. Whereas therefore a Father makes a Son, and a Son a Father, they muſt both have one Mind, one Spirit, one Subſtance.* Lactantius, Lib. IV. Cap. 19.

(*x*) *Waterland*'s Defence of the Divinity of *Jeſus Chriſt*. (*y*) Matt. xxviii. 18. (*z*) Luke ix. 1.

that (*a*) *he knoweth all Things*, and *all Men*, to (*b*) *whoſe Sight every Creature is manifeſt*, and to *whoſe Eyes all Things are naked and laid open*, this cannot but imply his *Omniſcience*; that, (*c*) *where two or three are gather'd together in his Name, there is he in the midſt of them, even unto the End of the World*, this his *Omnipreſence*; that (*d*) *tho' the Heavens and the Earth ſhall be changed, yet he is the ſame, Yeſterday, To-day, and for ever*, this his *Immutability*; that he is (*e*) *Alpha and Omega, the firſt and the laſt, which is, and which was, and which is to come*, this his *Eternity*; that he is the *Jehovah*, the *Almighty*, (*f*) *who hath Life in himſelf*, and (*g*) *is over all God, bleſſed for ever*, his *neceſſary Exiſtence*, and *independent Supremacy*; and, laſtly, that (*h*) *he is in the Father, and the Father in him*, and that (*i*) *all Things, which the Father has*, are affirm'd to be *his*, this his full *Communion* in all the *eſſential* Properties and Perfections of God.

Divine Titles. WE need therefore leſs wonder, that we find all Manner of divine *Titles*, and *Appellations* beſtowed upon him, as plentifully as upon the Father; that he is not only called (*k*) *God* in common, but (*l*) *God with us*, (*m*) the *true God*, (*n*) the great God, (*o*) the *mighty God*, (*p*) the Lord God, (*q*) the *Lord of Glory*, the Lord over all Things, (*r*) *Lord of Lords, and King of Kings*, (*s*) *whoſe Dominion is an everlaſting Dominion*, and (*t*) *whoſe Throne is for ever and ever*, from whence *Irenæus* makes this concluſive Inference, "That, "neither our Lord, nor the *Holy Ghoſt*, "nor the *Apoſtles* would ever have called "any one *definitively*, and *abſolutely* God, "unleſs he were truly ſo."

Divine Worſhip. THE ſupreme Majeſty of Heaven has given us this Injunction, (*u*) *Thou ſhalt worſhip the Lord thy God, and him only ſhalt thou ſerve, for I* (*x*) *am a jealous God*, (*y*) *the Lord is my Name, and my Glory will I not give to another*; and yet when we find, in Scripture, that, (*z*) *at the Name of* Jeſus, *every Knee* is ordered to *bow, of Things in Heaven, and Things in the Earth, and Things under the Earth*; that all the Angels of God (*a*) *are commanded to worſhip him*; and that Myriads of theſe celeſtial Inhabitants are continually (*b*) *praiſing him, and ſaying, worthy is the Lamb that was ſlain, to receive Power, and Riches, and Wiſdom, and Strength, and Honour, and Glory, and Bleſſing*, in Communion with *him, that ſitteth on the Throne:* When we find *Chriſtians* every where diſtinguiſh'd by the Practice of (*c*) *calling upon the Name of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt*; the *Apoſtles*, in their Epiſtles to the ſeveral Churches, (*d*) *wiſhing them Grace and Peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jeſus Chriſt*; and making their Supplications to (*e*) *our Lord Jeſus Chriſt himſelf*, as well as to *God the Father*, that *he would comfort their Hearts, and ſtabliſh them in every good Word, and Work:* When we find St. *Stephen*, in the very Moment of his Expiration, (*f*) *calling upon God, and ſaying*, * *Lord Jeſus receive my Spirit*; St. *Paul* concluding with this Benediction, (*g*) *the Grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, as well as the *Love of God, and Fellowſhip of the Holy Ghoſt, be with you all*; and our bleſſed Saviour himſelf preſcribing this Form of *Initiation* into the Chriſtian Covenant, (*h*) *Go ye therefore, and teach all Nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghoſt:* In ſhort, when we find God the Son, equally with God the Father, (*i*) propoſed as the Object of our Faith, Hope and Love; as the Perſon, whom we are to obey, to truſt in, to pray to, and to praiſe, ſo that every Act of Worſhip, both *external* and *internal*, is directed to him; we cannot but conclude, that *ſuch as the Father is, ſuch is the Son, that* (*k*) *all Men ſhould therefore honour the Son, even as they honour the Father, and that he, who honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father, who ſent him.*

THE *Holy Ghoſt* himſelf is a *divine* Perſon, *one* with God the Father, and ador'd *And divine Operations ſufficiently confirm.* *together*

(*a*) John xvi. 30. and ii. 24. (*b*) Heb. iv. 12, 13. (*c*) Mat. xviii. 20, &c. xxviii. 20. (*d*) Heb. i. 11. and xiii. 8. (*e*) Rev. i. 17. (*f*) John v. 26. (*g*) Rom. ix. 5. (*h*) John xiv. 11. (*i*) John xvi. 15. (*k*) John i. 1. (*l*) Mat. i. 23. (*m*) John viii. 20. (*n*) Tit. ii. 13. (*o*) Iſa. ix. 6. (*p*) Luke i. 16. (*q*) 1 Cor. ii. 10. (*r*) 1 Tim. vi. 15. (*s*) Dan. iv. 34. (*t*) Heb. ii. 8. (*u*) Mat. iv. 1, 10. (*x*) Exod. xx. 5. (*y*) Iſa. xlii 8. (*z*) Phil. ii. 10. (*a*) Heb. i. 6. (*b*) Rev. v. 12, 13. (*c*) 1 Cor. i. 2. (*d*) Rom. i. 7. (*e*) 2 Theſſ. ii. 16, 17. (*f*) Acts vii. 59.

* From this it ſeems very evident, that, if Chriſt was not the *true* God, and equal to the Father, this *Protomartyr* died in an Act, that ſeems not only *idolatrous*, but even *blaſphemous*, ſince he worſhipped Chriſt in the ſame Act and Words, in which Chriſt had worſhipped his Father, Luke xxiii. 46. *Burnet* on the Articles.

(*g*) 2 Cor. xiii. 13. (*h*) Mat. xxviii. 19. (*i*) *Burnet* on the 39 Articles. (*k*) John v. 23.

together with him, as the *Catholick* Church has all along confeſs'd; and yet our bleſſed Saviour ſeems to imply, that, at leaſt, he is *equal* if not ſuperior to him, when he tells his Apoſtles, *(a) I will ſend the Comforter, even the Spirit of Truth, from the Father, to teſtify of me, and to glorify me, for he ſhall receive of mine, and ſhew it unto you.* The *Creation* of the World is confeſſedly the Work of *Almighty* Power, and Wiſdom *infinite*, and yet we are told by St. *John*, that *(b) all Things were made by Chriſt, and without him was not any Thing made, that was made.* The *Preſervation* of it is a Continuation of the ſame divine *Efficacy*, for nothing leſs, than *that*, which made the World, is capable of ſuſtaining it in its proper Order; and yet St. *Paul* aſſures us, that, as *(c) by him all Things were created, ſo by him all Things conſiſt*, for *(d)* he *preſerveth all Things by the Word of his Power.* The *Redemption* of the World from the *Guilt* and Dominion of Sin, the *Power* of Death, and the *Tyranny* of Satan, was a Work equivalent to its *Creation*; and yet we are told, that our *(e) Saviour Jeſus Chriſt gave himſelf for us, that he might redeem us from all Iniquity*; *(f)* that *through Death he might deſtroy him, who had the Power of Death*, i. e. *the Devil, and deliver them, who, by the Fear of Death, were all their Life-time ſubject unto Bondage.* The *Remiſſion* of Sins is certainly a *Branch* of the divine *Prerogative*, for *(g) who can forgive Sins, except God only?* (ſaid the *Jews* very truly;) and yet our Saviour, *(h)* in the Caſe of the *Paralytick*, wrought a Miracle to ſhew his Power to do this, and, in the Caſe of *Mary Magdalen*, exerted it to the utmoſt; *(i) I ſay unto thee, her Sins, which are many, are forgiven, for ſhe loved much.* The *Reſurrection of the Dead* is God's peculiar Work, for *(k) he killeth, and he maketh alive, he bringeth down to the Grave, and he bringeth up*; and yet we are given to underſtand, that *(l) as the Father raiſeth up the Dead, and quickneth them, even ſo the Son quickneth whom he will.* To *Judge the World* is a Province too great and extenſive for any created Being to execute; and yet *(m) the Father*, we are told, *hath committed all Judgment unto the Son*; ſo that it is *(n) before the Judgment-Seat of Chriſt that we muſt all appear, that every one may receive the Things done in his Body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.* To *proportion* Rewards and Puniſhments, according to the Merit or Demerit of all Mankind, can be done by him alone, *whoſe Eyes run to and fro through the whole Earth, who is about our Path, and about our Bed, and ſpieth out all our Ways*; and yet we are inform'd, that, when the Son of Man ſhall have made a proper *Separation* between the Wicked and the Righteous; *(o) Depart from me, ye Curſed, into everlaſting Fire*, and *come, ye Bleſſed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the Foundation of the World*, ſhall be the different Sentences pronounced by his Lips.

A Summary and Application of theſe Particulars.

To ſum up what has been ſaid in proof of our Lord's *Divinity*: Since the *Meſſiah*, whom the *Jews* expected to come into the World, was to ſuſtain the *Character* of the *Son of God*, and our bleſſed Saviour, when he made his Appearance, aſſum'd to himſelf that Character; ſince the *Apoſtles*, and other inſpired Writers, do conſtantly give him that *Appellation*, and the ancient *Fathers*, and beſt *Interpreters*, do always intend thereby the *Truth* and *Reality* of his divine Nature; ſince, in Confirmation of this great Article, the Scripture all along aſcribes to him ſuch *Attributes* and *Perfections*, ſuch *Titles* and *Appellations*, ſuch *Honour* and *Worſhip*, and ſuch *Works* and *Operations*, as are peculiar to the great God of Heaven and Earth, and incommunicable to any other; we muſt from hence be conſtrain'd to infer, that, in the *ſtricteſt Senſe* of the Word, he is really and truly God. Every ſingle *Title* (as *(p)* one expreſſes it) is enough to juſtify the Inference; but all together make ſo *full* and clear Demonſtration of it, that one might juſtly wonder, how any, that retain the leaſt Regard and Reverence for the ſacred Writ, ſhould make any ſerious Doubt of it. If *Titles* alone, however, are not of Weight ſufficient, *Attributes* come in to ſtrengthen and confirm; them and if there ſtill remains any *Scruple*, ſuch *Honour* and *Adoration*, as are paid to Chriſt, and ſuch divine

(a) John xv. 26, *&c.* xvi. 14. *(b)* John i. 3. *(c)* Col. i. 16, 17. *(d)* Heb. i. 3. *(e)* Tit. ii. 14. *(f)* Heb. ii. 14, 15. *(g)* Mark ii. 7. *(h)* Mark ii. 10, 11. *(i)* Luke vii. 47, *&c.* *(k)* 1 Sam. ii. 6. *(l)* John v. 21. *(m)* John v. 22. *(n)* 2 Cor. v. 10. *(o)* Mat. xxv. 33, *&c.* *(p) Waterland* on his Vindication of Chriſt's Divinity.

divine *Operations*, as are aſcrib'd to him, cannot fail, one would think, to make the *Proof* irrefragable: For can we ſuppoſe that the holy *Jeſus*, who was the moſt perfect Pattern of Humility, Meekneſs, and Modeſty, ſhould ever lay claim to a *Character*, that did not belong to him, when conſcious to himſelf, that, as to any *real* Perfection, he was infinitely *diſtant* from God, infinitely *inferior* to him, nay infinitely *baſe* and mean in Compariſon of him? Can we ſuppoſe, that when (*a*) *his Diſciples worſhipped him*, he would not have check'd their miſguided Zeal, as (*b*) the Angel did St. *John*, and St. *Peter Cornelius*, with a (*c*) *Stand up, I myſelf alſo am a Man*, had he been of no higher Extract; (*d*) but when, inſtead of any *Reproof*, or Admonition to the contrary, he *magnifies*, rather than *leſſens* the Veneration, they had for him, we may thence conclude, that he himſelf knew, and was willing that they ſhould underſtand him to be *equal* to the Father, and, conſequently, a proper Object of divine Adoration? Can we ſuppoſe, that the holy Scriptures, which were *written for our Inſtruction*, and not to ſeduce us into Error, ſhould aſcribe ſo many glorious *Titles*, eſſential *Properties*, and divine *Prerogatives* to him, which, if not true, cannot poſſibly fail of leading, even wiſe, and good, and conſcientious Men (and that in a Matter of greateſt Importance) into the groſſeſt *Deception?* Above all, can we ſuppoſe, that God himſelf ſhould *contribute* to the Deception, not only by ſuffering ſuch *plauſible* Appearances, and ſpecious Preſumptions of a Thing, that is falſe, to ſtand ſo *eminently* in a Book of his own *Inſpiration*; but by *aſſiſting* the Deceiver likewiſe in working ſuch Miracles, as (*e*) *manifeſted forth his Glory*, and gave Credit and Authority to all his Claims and Pretenſions; for ſo we find him appealing to them, (*f*) *The Works, that I do in my Father's Name, they bear Witneſs of me*; (*g*) *Believe therefore, that I am in the Father, and the Father in me, or elſe believe me for the very Work's Sake.*

That this Divinity *is derived from God the Father.*

THE *Divinity* of our bleſſed Saviour, ſtands therefore *ultimately* upon the *Truth* and *Veracity* of God, and thoſe *Declarations*, that he hath made of it in his holy Word. But now, as the whole *Tenour* of our Religion denies a *Plurality*, and aſſerts the *Unity* of the Godhead, if our Saviour be truly God, he muſt of Neceſſity partake of the ſame *individual* Eſſence with God the Father: For, (*h*) that there can be but one *Eſſence* properly *divine*, and ſo but one God of infinite Power, Wiſdom, and Majeſty; that, in this infinite Being, there can be but one *Perſon* originally ſubſiſting of himſelf, becauſe a *Plurality* of Perſons, ſo ſubſiſting, would neceſſarily infer a *Multiplicity* of Gods; and that the Father of our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt* is *originally* God, as not receiving his eternal Being from any other; theſe are *Propoſitions*, that cannot well be diſputed: And from hence it will follow, that as *Jeſus Chriſt* (who is certainly *not* the Father) cannot be the *Perſon*, who, in this Manner, ſubſiſts in the divine Nature, and yet is acknowledged to be truly and properly the *eternal* God; he muſt be underſtood to have this Godhead communicated to him by the Father, who is not only *eternally*, but *originally* God: And, as the Godhead is not only *immaterial*, but *indiviſible* likewiſe, he muſt be ſuppoſed to have it communicated to him, not *in Part*, but in the ſame (*i*) *Fulneſs*, that the Father poſſeſſes; for which Reaſon we find the Scriptures calling him (*k*) *the Image of the inviſible God*, (*l*) *the Brightneſs of his Glory*, and the *Character*, or exact Impreſſion *of his Subſtance*; and, upon the Foot of this *Similitude*, this *Identity*, himſelf affirming, that (*m*) *he and his Father were one*; (*n*) *that he is in the Father, and the Father in him*; *and that all Things*, that (*o*) *the Father hath*, and, conſequently, divine Nature and Perfections, *are his.*

Is of the ſame Nature *with his.*

Now how they came to be *his*, the Scripture, for want of a more ſignificant Expreſſion, and to accommodate the *Myſtery*, in ſome meaſure, to our Apprehenſion, in calling him (*p*) ſo frequently his *only-begotten Son*, tells us, that it is by way of *Generation*: For, ſince Generation is nothing elſe, but the *vital* Production of another in the ſame *Nature*, a *Communication* of the divine Nature to the Son, may properly enough fall under that Denomination, nay more properly than any *human* Generation can. In

Properly called a Generation.

(*a*) Luke xxiv. 52. (*b*) Rev. xxii. 9. (*c*) Acts x. 26. (*d*) *Waterland*'s Vindication of Chriſt's Divinity. (*e*) John ii. 12. (*f*) John x. 24, 25. (*g*) John xiv. 11. (*h*) *Pearſon* on the Creed. (*i*) Col. ii. 9. (*k*) Col. i. 15. (*l*) Heb. i. 3. (*m*) John x. 30. (*n*) John xiv. 10. (*o*) John xvi. 15. (*p*) John i. 14, 18. and iii. 16, 18.

In (*a*) *human* Generations indeed, the Son is of the ſame *Nature* with the Father, but ſtill he is not the ſame *Man*; he has an Eſſence of the ſame *kind*, but not the *ſame* Eſſence, and is therefore a *different* Perſon: But in the Generation, we are now ſpeaking of, the divine Eſſence being, by Reaſon of its *Simplicity*, indiviſible, and, in reſpect of its *Infinity*, incapable of *Multiplication*, is ſo communicated, as to make the Father and Son, not of the ſame *individual* Nature only, but one and the *ſame God.*

In ſhort, (*b*) ſince God has given Power to his Creatures to beget Sons in their own *Likeneſs*, every one of the ſame *ſpecifick* Nature with his Father; when God himſelf begets a Son, 'tis reaſonable to ſuppoſe, that his Son muſt *needs* be of the ſame Nature with the Father, but in a more eminent and divine Manner; and ſince we are ſufficiently inſtructed in Scripture, (*c*) that all other divine *Productions*, together with the *Relations* founded thereon, are quite different from *this*, we have Reaſon to conclude, (* as Chriſtians in all Ages have concluded) that, in this Way of communicating the divine Eſſence, (which may not improperly be called *Generation*) our Saviour *Chriſt is the only Son of God.*

How this *Communication* is effected, or in what Manner the divine Nature *emanates* from the Father to the Son, *preſerving* the *Unity*, and yet *diſtinguiſhing* the *Perſons*, this is a *Myſtery* (as (*d*) one expreſſes it) that all Mankind are equally ignorant of, and ſo muſt continue, at leaſt till the Day of Judgment, without ſome new Revelation. (*e*) Various indeed are *Similitudes*, which the *Ancients* make uſe of to help our Conceptions in this Matter. They tell us, that, as *Streams* are generated by the Fountain, *Light* by the Sun, and *Branches* from the Root, ſo is the Son produced by the Father; but whether any of theſe will abide a ſtrict Examination, I ſhall not pretend to determine: This only I may venture to ſay, that none of them do yield us any *adequate* and ſatisfactory Apprehenſion of this *ſublime* and *incomprehenſible Myſtery*; and therefore to conclude our Enquiry in this wiſe Advice of the famous (*f*) *Alex-*

But the Manner of it is inexplicable.

(*a*) *Pearſon* on the Creed. (*b*) Bp. *Beveridge* on the Church Catechiſm. (*c*) *Barrow* on the Creed.

* Thus, in Teſtimony of our Saviour's being the Son, the *eternal* Son of God, and, in that Reſpect of the ſame *Subſtance* with him, we are told by *Hermas*, who lived very near the *Apoſtolick* Times, not only that *the Son exiſted before all Creatures, and was with the Father, as his Counſellor, in the Creation of all Things; but that his Name is great and immenſe, and that the whole World is ſuſtain'd by him:* By *Ignatius*, who lived ſoon after, that, *in the Beginning, before all Creation, God begat, out of himſelf, a certain rational Power, which is ſometimes called his Son, his Wiſdom, his Glory, and his Word, yet not the Word of his Speech, but of his Subſtance:* By *Juſtin* the *Martyr*, that *the Father of all Things has a Son, who, being the firſt-born Word of God, is God, and was begotten of him in a proper and peculiar Manner, far above the common Generation:* By *Titian* his Diſciple, that *the Son was begotten of the Father, not by Abſciſſion, but by Communication, as one Fire is kindled by another without any Diminution of it:* By *Athenagoras*, that *the Son is the Word of God in Idea and Energy*; that *all Things were by him, and for him, and that he is the firſt-begotten of the Father, but not ſo, as to be a made, or created Being:* By *Irenæus*, that *the Son had no Beginning of his Generation, but always co-exiſted with the Father, and that Chriſt, with the Father, is the God of the Living, who ſpake to* Moſes, *and appear'd to the Fathers:* By *Clemens* of *Alexandria*, that *the Son was the firſt, and, before all Ages, the perfect Reſemblance of the inviſible God, and equal to the Lord of all Things, becauſe he was his Son:* By *Tertullian*, that *the Son, who was begotten before all Things, can be deduced from no other Cauſe, but from the Subſtance of the Father, in the Unity of which Subſtance they are one God, even as the Sun and its Rays are one Sun:* By *Origen*, that *the Son, who was begotten of his Father, without Beginning, and from all Eternity, is of the ſame Nature and Subſtance with him, as a Vapour is conſubſtantial with that Body from whence it aroſe:* By *Cyprian*, that *Chriſt, the firſt-begotten, by whom all Things were made, is both God and Man, partaking of both Natures, that he might be a Mediator between us and the Father:* By *Hippolitus*, that *the Son was always God by Nature, and that his Divinity, both before and after his Incarnation, was a ſubſtantial Subſiſtence, infinite by Nature, incomprehenſible, and endued with all other Divine Perfections:* By *Dionyſius* of *Alexandria*, that *in this divine Generation, the Father and Son are conſubſtantial, partaking of the ſame Nature, as Father and Son do in an human Birth:* By *Lucian* the *Martyr*, that *the Son was begotten of his Father before all Ages, God of God, Whole of Whole, Perfect of Perfect, the immutable Image of his Father's Godhead, Eſſence and Power:* And (to name no more) by *Lactantius*, that *ſince the Father produced the Son, and the Son was produced by the Father, they have but one Mind, one Godhead, one Subſtance, becauſe whatever is in the Father, is tranſmitted to the Son, and whatever is in the Son, deſcends from the Father.* We have here, at one View, moſt of the *antient* Fathers, the *Catholick* Doctors of the three firſt *Centuries*, who wrote before the *Term Conſubſtantial* was eſtabliſh'd, giving Evidence to this great Doctrine, that our Saviour Chriſt, before he was incarnate, was the Son of God by an *eternal Generation*, being begotten of the very Subſtance of his Father; and, conſequently, that they are *one God* by Eſſence, *original* in the Father, and *derivative* in the Son. Bp. *Bull*'s Defence of the Nicene Faith, *Stephens* of the eternal Generation, and *Waterland*'s Defence of the Div. of Chriſt.

(*d*) *Swift*'s Sermons. (*e*) Hiſt. of the Apoſtles Creed. (*f*) Epiſt. ad Alex. Conſtant. apud Theod. Eccleſ.

Alexander, Biſhop of *Alexandria*; "It is "true that the Son of God was be- "gotten, *ſays he*, but he, that enquires "farther into the *Manner* thereof, is not to "be reckon'd among the *Pious*, ſeeing he "hearkens not to that, which is written. "*Seek not after Things, which are too dif-* "*ficult*; and *ſearch not into thoſe Things,* "*which are too high for thee*; for, if the "Knowledge of many other Things, far "inferior to *this*, exceeds the Reach of any "human Underſtanding, how then ſhall "any, without Madneſs, pretend *curiouſly* "to ſearch into the *Eſſence* of the divine "*Word*, of whom the *Holy Ghoſt*, by the "Prophet, ſayeth, *(a) Who ſhall declare his* "*Generation?*

The OBJECTION.

"THE divine Generation of *Jeſus* "*Chriſt* is indeed a *Paradox*, "whereof we can form no Notion. That "the *ſupreme*, *ſelf-exiſtent*, and *independent* "God, ſhould, from all *Eternity*, beget a "Son of his own *Subſtance*, without *Be-* "*ginning* or *Succeſſion*, without *Diviſion* "or *Multiplication*, the ſame in *Nature*, "but in *Perſonality* different, *co-equal* in "ſome Reſpects, and in others *ſubordi-* "*nate*; this is a Matter, that croſſes all our "common Conceptions. But, allowing "the *ſecond Perſon* in the *Trinity* to be ſo "generated, we cannot ſee, for what Rea- "ſon he ſhould therefore be called the *only* "*Son* of God, becauſe the *Holy Ghoſt* does "equally participate of the divine Nature "communicated from the Father, and "and has therefore the ſame Right to this "*Filiation*. (*b*) *To us*, however, *there is but* "*one God the Father, of whom are all* "*Things*, and we in him: *There is one* "Jeſus Chriſt likewiſe, *by whom are all* "*Things, and we by him*; but then we "muſt ſuppoſe him a Perſon of vaſt *Infe-* "*riority* to the *ſupreme* God, though great- "ly pre-eminent, both in *Dignity* and *Du-* "*ration*, to every other Being, and there- "fore called *the* (*c*) *Beginning of the Crea-* "*tion*, and *(d) Firſt-born of every Creature.* "The Son indeed is ſaid, in ſome Places, "to have *made the World*; but then this "muſt be underſtood, not of his being "properly the *efficient*, but only the *in-* "*ſtrumental* Cauſe of that great Work, "for which Reaſon, the Scripture informs "us, that God *(e)* by his Son *made the* "*World*, and *(f) created all Things by* Jeſus "Chriſt. (*g*) *There is one God*, ſays St. *Paul*, "*and one Mediator between God and Man*; "but then we are to remember that this "Mediator is the *Man Chriſt Jeſus*, and "that, when his *mediatorial* Office comes "to ceaſe, his *Inferiority* to the Father "ſhall be ſufficiently manifeſt, for (*h*) *then* "*ſhall the Son be ſubject unto him, that put* "*all Things under him, that God may be all* "*in all.* As God's *Vicegerent* or Ambaſ- "ſador, he is likewiſe ſaid *to (i) be in the* "*Form of God*; but that he did not aſſume "this Character upon any other Account, "than his *Sanctification* and *Miſſion* from "the Father, is evident by his Anſwer to "the *Jews*, when (*k*) *they took up Stones* "*to ſtone him*, for having ſaid, *that he, and* "*his Father were one*; *If ye call them Gods,* "*unto whom the Word of God came, ſay ye* "*of him, whom the Father hath ſanctified,* "*and ſent into the World, thou blaſphemeſt,* "*becauſe I ſaid, I am the Son of God?* (*l*) "*Why calleſt thou me good*, ſays he again to "the *Man*, who came to ask him a very "important Queſtion, *there is none good, but* "*one, that is God?* whereby he ſeems to "exclude himſelf; and therefore we find "him, in other Places, telling us, that "*(m) the Father is greater than he*; that "he is ignorant of ſeveral Things, (*n*) par- "ticularly of the *Day of Judgment*; and "*(o) that of himſelf he did nothing*, but "*ſpake all Things*, even *as the Father had* "*taught him*, which certainly imply a ſuf- "ficient *Inferiority*."

Anſwer'd, by ſhewing, that the Generation *of the* Son, *and* Proceſſion *of the* Holy Ghoſt *are equally* myſterious.

THE *Generation* of the Son of God, and the *Proceſſion* of the Holy Ghoſt by a *Communication* of the ſame Divine Nature to them both; and for what Reaſon it is, that God, in the *Revelation* of his Will, has thought proper to give them theſe *different* Appellations; theſe are *Myſteries*, we own, which the moſt exalted Underſtanding cannot *comprehend*, and which no Words of human Invention can expreſs. (*p*) We have indeed no *adequate* Idea of

(*a*) Iſa. liii. 8. (*b*) 1 Cor. viii. 6. (*c*) Rev. iii. 14. (*d*) Col. i. 15. (*e*) Heb. i. 2. (*f*) Eph. iii. 9. (*g*) 1 Tim. ii. 5. (*h*) 1 Cor. xv. 28. (*i*) Phil. ii. 6. (*k*) John x. 30, &c. (*l*) Matt. xix. 17. (*m*) John xiv. 28. (*n*) Mark xiii. 32. (*o*) John viii. 28, 29. (*p*) *Rogers*'s Ser.

Objects, which exceed the Meaſure and Proportion of our Underſtandings; and therefore it is *impoſſible* we ſhould ever deviſe any *Words*, which can exactly repreſent them to us: And, as God himſelf, in the Diſcovery of any ſublime Truths, is obliged to expreſs himſelf in ſuch Words, as *familiar* Uſe has made intelligible to us, it cannot but ſo happen, that the *Words*, which he employs to this Purpoſe, muſt neceſſarily fall vaſtly ſhort of the *Nature* of the *Subjects*, which he reveals, and of the *Ideas*, which they have in his *ſuperior* Underſtanding: To confine the Words in Scripture therefore, which expreſs the wonderful Things of God, ſtrictly to the ſame Senſe, which they have in common *Conſtruction*, is arguing upon a Suppoſition, that is utterly falſe. All, that theſe Words are deſign'd to do, is to convey unto us a *Meaning* ſomewhat *analagous* to the Thing: And therefore, when we affirm from Scripture, that *Chriſt is the Son of God*, he, who would argue againſt it from the Nature and Properties of ſuch *Generations*, as occur amongſt us, plainly *trifles* with the Argument, becauſe an *eternal Generation* is what we can have no *Notion* of, and, conſequently, can never frame any *Word* to expreſs it. Tho' therefore the Words *begotten*, and *Son*, come the neareſt of any, that could be uſed, to denote the *Relation* between theſe two *Perſons* in the ever-bleſſed *Trinity*; yet to confine them *preciſely* to the *ſame* Senſe, when they refer to a *ſupernatural* Subject, with what they have, when applied to a *natural* one, is a Way of Reaſoning, that is utterly *inconcluſive*.

Yet Terms *to be adher'd to.*

(*a*) But though the Scripture Language is far from being capable of conveying to us any *adequate* Idea of ſuch *Subjects*, as tranſcend all human Comprehenſion; yet are we obliged to adhere to it, becauſe, in Matters of this Nature, it is the only *Guide* of our Conception and our Speech. Thus, tho', in the Communication of the Divine Nature, the *Holy Ghoſt* receiveth the ſame *Eſſence* from the Father, as does the Son, yet we muſt not therefore call them by the ſame *Appellation*, becauſe, tho' the *Eſſence*, which is communicated, be the ſame, there is a *Difference* in the *Manner* of Communication. To illuſtrate this by ſome kind of *Similitude*. (*b*) *Eve*, we know, was produced out of *Adam*, and in the ſame Nature with him, and yet ſhe was not *born* of him, nor was ſhe properly his *Daughter*; whereas *Seth*, proceeding from the ſame Perſon, in the Similitude of the ſame Nature, was truly and properly his *Son*, and the Difference between *them* lay, not in the *Nature*, that was produced in them, but in the *Manner* of its Production: And ſo we may ſay of the *Son*, and the *Holy Ghoſt*. The Divine Nature in both is the ſame, but the Son is God by *Generation*, the Holy Ghoſt by *Proceſſion*; and therefore ſince, in the Language of Scripture, the Holy Ghoſt is never ſaid to be *begotten*, but to *proceed* from the Father, nor is he ever called the *Son*, but only the *Gift of God*, we muſt not preſume to think, or call him otherwiſe.

As the Son of God, Chriſt is conſubſtantial.

THUS is *Jeſus Chriſt*, (*excluſive* of all others) the *only begotten* Son of God, and, for this Reaſon, muſt be conſider'd as a Perſon of the ſame Subſtance with the Father, (*c*) becauſe the moſt proper, and indeed the only proper Generation, that we know of, is, *the Production of another in the ſame Nature with the Producer*. And as the Divine Eſſence was thus communicated from God the Father to God the Son, ſo was it deriv'd to him, not in any *inferior* Degree, but in the ſame full Perfection, as the Father himſelf enjoys it: For, ſince in itſelf it is a *ſimple*, and undivided Eſſence, it can admit of no *Multiplication* of Parts, has in it no *Degrees* of Perfection, and cannot be communicated *incompleatly*; for which Reaſon we find St. *Paul* aſſerting, that (*d*) *in him, who is the Head of all Principality and Power, dwelleth all the Fulneſs of the Godhead bodily*; and from hence it follows, that the Son of God is not only *co-equal* with the Father, as ſubſiſting in the ſame Nature, but *co-eternal* with him likewiſe, as partaking of the ſame Attributes, whereof *Eternity* is one of the chief: For, ſince theſe *Attributes* do neceſſarily follow the Communication of the *Eſſence*, it cannot be ſuppoſed, that the Son ſhould have all the Divine Nature in common with the Father, and yet want any *eſſential* Property belonging to it. If the Son be *generated* from the Father's *Subſtance*, he muſt infallibly have all the Perfections belonging to that Subſtance; and therefore, as *Eternity* is one of theſe Perfections, his Generation muſt have been from all Eternity, otherwiſe, it could not be a Communication of the Divine Nature, which we all allow to be *eternal*.

And co-eternal with him.

BUT

(*a*) *Barrow* on the Creed. (*b*) *Pearſon* on the Creed. (*c*) *Stephens* on the eternal Generation of the Son of God. (*d*) Col. ii. 9, 10.

And yet in some Sense subordinate *and inferior to him.*

BUT, notwithstanding this *Equality* in Essence, and all essential Properties, the *Catholick* Doctors did always acknowledge, that there was a certain *(a) Subordination* of the Son to the Father; that the Son indeed has the *same* divine Nature with the Father, but then that the Father *alone* has the divine Nature *in himself*, which the Son by Communication receiving from him, owes his *Original* to the Father; and therefore *(b)* they make no Scruple to admit, that our Saviour's Expression, when he affirms, that *his Father is greater than him*, tho' it *primarily* relates to the *human*, may, nevertheless, be understood even of the *divine* Nature of Christ, without any *Derogation* to his Godhead. For, since the Son is *of* the Father, and not the Father *of* the Son, the Father must certainly be *greater* than the Son, tho' not in any *essential* Perfection, (wherein they are both equal) but in *Causality* and *Origin*, as he is the Head and Fountain, the Author and Giver of the Son's Divinity. And, in like manner, when our Saviour declares, that *(c) he came down from Heaven to do the Will of him, that sent him*, tho' the Words were first intended of his *human* Nature, yet I see no Inconveniency in referring them to his *divine*; because the Father, who *sends*, must, for that very Reason, be greater than the Son, who is *sent*; *greater*, in respect of the *Office*, which was executed by the Son, and conferred by the Father, and *greater* in Respect of the natural *Order* and *Priority*, which made it proper for the Son, and not for the Father (whose very Name implies *Authority)* to submit to the Employment of being his *Legate* or *Ambassador*.

IN short, *(d)* all those Texts, which seem to imply an *Inferiority* in the Son, may fairly be *reconciled* with those others, which ascribe to him the *Nature*, and all the essential Attributes of God, by understanding them, either of his *human* Nature, as distinct from his *divine*, or of his *ministerial Office*, which he undertook in the *Oeconomy* of Man's *Redemption*, or of such a *Subordination*, as is founded upon *Generation*, *viz.* of a Son to a Father, a mere *Relation* of *Order*, which is not inconsistent with a strict *Equality* of *Nature*.

How the Father may be called the one *God.*

(e) SOME Sort of *Subordination* indeed is no less than necessary, in order to prevent an Imputation of *Tritheism*, because three *coordinate* Persons are certainly three Gods. Something of this Kind the very Notion of a *Son* seems to imply, as that of a *Father* denotes a *Priority* in Nature. Such personal Differences and Distinctions are absolutely requisite to *discriminate* the Father from the Son; but then they make no Manner of *Alteration* in Relation to the *Godhead*, wherein they are both alike. The Father indeed, in his *personal* Character, as being the *first* in Order, as well as in our *Conceptions*, in the *Scale* of the *Trinity*, and as being the *Root* of the Deity, and the only *one* of the three divine Persons, that is *unoriginated*, may not improperly be called *the one God*; but, *essentially* consider'd, he is not superior to either of the other. *(f)* The whole sacred *Triad*, are but *one God*; and, in this Respect none of the three Persons are *greater or less than the other*, but the *whole are equal in Power, Majesty*, and every other divine Perfection.

The Apostles Meaning *in it.*

THO' therefore the Father, consider'd in his *personal* Character, might more *emphatically* be called *God*, yet that the Apostle, by that Passage in his Epistle, where he says, *(g) that to us there is but one God the Father*, meant not to exclude *Jesus Christ* from *real* and essential *Divinity*, is evident, because, in so doing, he must have *contradicted*, not only all the other inspir'd Writers of the *new* Testament, but even himself likewise: For, when he affirms of Christ, that *(h) he is over all, God blessed for ever*, a stronger Declaration could not have been made of the *strict* and indubitable Godhead of the Father; and therefore the *Apostle*'s Design in that Place (as plainly appears from the *Context*) was, not to *contradistinguish* God the Father from the other divine Persons in the blessed Trinity, but only to *oppose* him to *false Objects* of Religious Worship, *(i) to the Gods many, and Lords many*, who had their *Images* set up in *Temples*, and *Votaries* innumerable in every Part of the *heathen* World, and, at the same Time, to declare, that the true Object of Christian Worship was *the Father*, one God only in Nature and Substance, not *many*, like *Pagan* Deities, and his Son *Jesus Christ*, one *Lord* only, not many, like the *Baalim* among the *Syrians* and *Zidonians*.

HAD

(a) John xiv. 28. (b) *Wheatley* on the Creeds. (c) John xii. 49. (d) *Seed*'s Ser. Vol. II.
(e) *Stephens* on the eternal Generation. (f) *Twells*'s Ser. at Lady *Moyer*'s Lect. (g) 1 Cor. viii. 6.
(h) Rom. ix. 5. (i) 1 Cor. viii. 5, 6.

And yet Christ not an inferior God.

HAD Christ been only an *inferior*, a *nominal*, and *subordinate* God, tho' he might greatly surpass these *heathen* Deities, who receiv'd divine Honours and Oblations, yet was he no ways qualified to be joined in Company with the *supreme*; and yet, when we find him putting in his Claim, that (*a*) *Men should honour the Son, even as they do the Father*, we cannot but think, that he insists upon his *Equality* to the utmost. For, (*b*) since the Glory and Honour, which are due to God the Father, are founded on the *Perfections* of the divine Nature, *Omniscience*, *Omnipresence*, *infinite Power*, *Goodness*, &c. if the Son be entitled to the same *Honour*, it must be upon account of his being vested with the same *Perfections*. An Equality of *Honour* supposes an Equality of *Perfections*; an Equality of *Perfections* implies an Equality of *Nature*; and an Equality of Nature apparently shews, that this Nature must be deriv'd to the Son by a Communication from the Father, because, as there can be but one divine *Essence*, there can be but one *Person* that is *self-originated*, and underived.

Why said to be the Beginning of Creation.

IT must be own'd indeed, that, tho' the Son is thus apparently of the same divine Nature with the Father, yet is he in St. *John* called, (*c*) *the Beginning of the Creation of God*, and by St. *Paul*, (*d*) the *First-born of every Creature*, which, (according to the Sound of Words) seem to imply, that he is no more than a *Creature* of God's *Making*, tho' the *first*, and perhaps the most *distinguish'd* Work of his Hands: (*e*) But the Word, which we render *Beginning*, being a Term of great *Latitude*, and capable of many Senses, may, when it is applied to Christ, (who is said *to have made all Things*, and to *govern all Things*) not improperly signify the *Head*, the *Original*, or *efficient Cause* of all Things, or of the whole Creation.

And the First-born of every Creature.

And, in like manner, what we render *the First-born of every Creature* should rather be translated *born before the whole Creation*, as is manifest from the *Context*, which gives the Reason why he is *so* called, *viz.* because *he is before all Things*, and because *by him were all Things created*, and, consequently, himself was *uncreated*, and existing with the Father from all *Eternity*.

(*f*) THIS however suggests a *Notion*, which was very *familiar* among the *Ancients*, *viz.* that, when it pleased God to make the World, he sent forth *the Word*, or his *only Son*, who had been always with him, to *create* all Things, and, when created, to *present* them, as it were, to him for his Acceptance and Approbation; and that the Son, accordingly, went out from the Father, created the World, laid it before him as his own, put himself at the Head of it, and in this Sense is *the First-born of every Creature*. But there is a more significant *Interpretation* of this Passage: The *Birth-Right* of old was of great Esteem, and carried with it *Precedency*, and *Dominion*. (*g*) The *First-born* is *natural* Heir, and *Justinian* tells us that the Word *Heir* did anciently signify *Lord*. The Scripture indeed uses the Terms *promiscally*, as if they were *equivalent*; for whereas St. *Peter* says *of Jesus*, that (*h*) *he is Lord of all*, St. *Paul* calls him (*i*) *Heir of all Things*, and then the Reason, given by the Apostle, why he calls him *the First-born of every Creature*, because all Things were created by him, will be extremely fit and proper; for well may he be said to be *the Lord*, and *Heir* of the whole Creation, (*k*) *who made all Things, that were made, and without whom was not any thing made, that was made.*

Christ the efficient Cause of the World's Creation.

HERE then let us *pause* a-while, and observe a *Demonstration* of our blessed Lord's *Divinity* from his Creation of the World. That Creation is a Work *peculiar* to God, and a *Characteristick* of Divinity in any one, that performs it, is evident from that Declaration in *Nehemiah*, (*l*) *Thou, even thou art the Lord alone; thou hast made Heaven, and the Heaven of Heavens, with all their Host, the Earth, and all Things that are therein, the Sea, and all that is therein, and thou preservest them all.* That of this Work our blessed Saviour was the *efficient*, and not *instrumental* Cause only, we have the Evidence of the *Royal Psalmist*, confirm'd by the Application of the Author to the *Hebrews*; (*m*) *Thou Lord, in the Beginning, hast laid the Foundation of the Earth, and the Heavens are the Work of thy Hands:* Nay, that he was not only the *efficient*, but the *final* Cause likewise of the whole Creation, we have that famous Testimony of St. *Paul* to convince us; *By him were all*

(*a*) John v. 23. (*b*) *Stephens* on the divine Generation. (*c*) Rev. iii. 14. (*d*) Col. i. 15. (*e*) *Stephens* on the divine Generation (*f*) *Fiddes's* Body, Vol. I. (*g*) *Tillotson* of the Divinity of our Saviour. (*h*) Acts x. 36. (*i*) Heb. i. 2. (*k*) John i. 3. (*l*) Neh. ix. 6. (*m*) Ps. cv. and Heb. i.

all Things created, that are in Heaven, and that are in Earth, viſible and inviſible, whether they be Thrones, or Dominions, or Principalities, or Powers; all Things were created by him, and for him, and he is before all Things, and by him all Things conſiſt.

Which proves him to be God.

Is this the Deſcription of a *Creature*? Could any Being, leſs than *divine*, however *dignified* and advanced, (to uſe the lofty Language of the *Prophet* on this Occaſion) *(a) Meaſure the Waters in the Hollow of his Hand? Could ſuch a one meet out the Heavens with* a *Span? Could he comprehend the Duſt of the Earth in a Meaſure? Could he weigh the Mountains in Scales, and the Hills in a Balance?* In vain is the Profeſſion of the *Pſalmiſt*, that *(b) the Heavens declare the Glory of God, and the Firmament ſheweth his Handy-work*, if theſe wonderful *Phænomena* might be produc'd by a Power ſhort of *infinite*; and in vain is the *Apoſtle*'s Reaſoning to the *Romans*, that *(c) the inviſible Things of God from the Creation of the World, are clearly ſeen, being underſtood by the Things that are made, even his eternal Power and Godhead*, (*d*) if the Son, who created the *Univerſe*, who laid the Foundations of this *terraqueous Globe*, who fram'd the immenſe *Bodies*, which move, with ſo much *Regularity*, in the ſuperior Regions, who made the very *Angels*, thoſe bright *Intelligences*, and glorious *Miniſters* of the Court of Heaven, to whom they owe their *Perfections*, their Strength, their Glory, their Life, and their very Being, and on whom they depend for their Support, and Preſervation, be himſelf but a *Creature*, neither *eternal*, nor *eſſentially* divine. The ſhort of the Matter is, (*e*) if the Title of *Creator* be in the holy Scriptures every where preſented as the ſure and certain *Character* of true Divinity; if nothing higher can be thought on, to raiſe in us the moſt *aweful* and *exalted Idea* of the *ſupreme* God; and if our bleſſed Saviour be openly and evidently ſet forth to us under the ſame high Character; if theſe be the *Premiſes*, I ſay, we may leave any Man of common Underſtanding to draw the *Concluſion*.

Though each Perſon *in the Trinity was concern'd in it.*

WE cannot but allow indeed, that (*f*) God the Father is the *efficient* Cauſe, the *Maker* and *Preſerver* likewiſe of every Creature, that exiſts, whether *animate* or *inanimate*, whether *intelligent*, or wholly void of Underſtanding; but this however does not exclude either the *Son*, or *holy Spirit*, from a joint Concurrence with him in the ſame Productions. There is but one *Will* in the eternal Mind; and whatſoever is willed is the *harmonious* Conſent of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt; nor need we add, that whatever is *effected*, or brought to paſs, (for, in ſpeaking of God, whoſe Pleaſure nothing can reſiſt, to *will* is to *effect*, and *bring to paſs*) is wrought by the *mutual* Co-operation of the three Perſons: And although, in an *æconomical* View, the Father, as *Head*, and *Fountain* of the Godhead, is frequently repreſented to us as *contriving*, and the Son, and Holy Ghoſt, as *executing*; yet there is ſo cloſe an *Intimacy* and Union, ſuch a ready and willing *Communication* of Properties between them, that every Act, perform'd by the *divine* Power, is wrought by the *combin'd* good Pleaſure, and joint Operation of them all.

The Nature of Chriſt's Mediatorſhip.

OF theſe divine Perſons, the *Second*, who is the Son, was appointed by the Father to be * *Mediator* between God and Men.(*g*) In this *Capacity* he was to be our *Prophet*,

(*a*) Iſa. xl. 12. (*b*) Pſal. xix. 1. (*c*) Rom. i. 20. (*d*) *Twells*'s Sermons. (*e*) *Waterland*'s Defence of Chriſt's Divinity. (*f*) *Snape*'s Ser. Vol. III.

* The *Greek* Word, which we tranſlate *Mediator*, ſignifies a Perſon, that *interpoſes* between two Parties, either to obtain ſome *Favour* from the one Party for the other, or to *adjuſt*, and make up ſome Difference between them. Now this Undertaking of his is either *voluntary*, without any *Warrant*, or Authority from the *Parties*, between whom he *interpoſes*, in which Caſe he acts merely as an *Orator*, and can only *perſuade* and intreat on both Sides: Or it is *authoritative*, and that two Ways, 1ſt, when the Perſon, who mediates, is *authoriz'd* thereunto by the *Conſent* and Deſignation of *both Parties*, both being equal, and, conſequently, having an equal *Right* to authorize him; in which Senſe he is the ſame, with what we, in *Engliſh*, call an *Umpire*, *i. e.* one, who acts for both Parties by Authority from both, and by whoſe Judgment both have obliged themſelves to be *determined*. But 2dly, the Mediation is *authoritative*, when he, who mediates, is thereunto authoriz'd by a *ſuperior* Party, who has a juſt *Authority* and Dominion over the *inferior*: For when a Mediator acts the Part of two *unequal* Parties, whereof the one is *ſuperior*, and has a juſt Dominion over the other, it is ſufficient, that he be *authoriz'd* by the Appointment of the *ſuperior*, and the *ſubject*, or *inferior* Party will be as much obliged by his Determination, as if he had *voluntarily* referred himſelf to him; which is the Caſe of the great *Mediator between God and Man, the Man Chriſt Jeſus*, who, in virtue of God's *abſolute* Dominion over us, is appointed by him to this great *Office*, ſince we, who, as *Creatures*, are infinitely his Inferiors, and, as *Sinners*, infinitely more degraded, could have no Right to ſuch *Appointment*, tho', in Gratitude to our gracious Sovereign for making ſuch Choice of his only Son, *every Tongue ſhould confeſs that* Jeſus Chriſt *is Lord, to the Glory of God the Father*, Phil. ii. 11. *Scot*'s Mediator.

(*g*) *Scot*'s Mediator.

Prieſt, and *King*; our *Prophet*, to inſtruct us; our *Prieſt*, to atone for us; and our *King*, to rule over us: But as he could not execute theſe *Offices* without aſſuming *human* Nature, he is therefore *emphatically* called *Man*, or *the Man* Chriſt Jeſus, though, at the ſame Time, we muſt not forget to obſerve, that, in order to make his Undertaking more *meritorious*, it was equally neceſſary that he ſhould be *God*, as well as Man; and therefore there is plainly no Oppoſition between him and *the one God*, ſince, as he is God, he is one of the *Perſons* in the ever-bleſſed Trinity. In this *mediatorial* Capacity, he is appointed (as I ſaid) to *rule* over us, to crown and reward all thoſe, that perſevere in their Duty, and to puniſh everlaſtingly ſuch, as finally *perſiſt* in their Rebellion. This he will do at the *Concluſion* of the Day of Judgment, and when this ſhall be done, the whole Buſineſs of his *mediatorial* Kingdom will be at an End; for, as our *beatifick Viſion* will ſuperſede the Neceſſity of his *prophetick* Office, to teach and inſtruct us; as our *Perfection* and entire Fruition will ſuperſede the Neceſſity of his *prieſtly* Office, to make Atonement and Interceſſion for us; ſo the *Security* of our Poſſeſſion of *both* will ſuperſede the Neceſſity of his *kingly* Office, to protect and defend us: And when our Affairs ſhall be reduced to this happy Iſſue, then ſhall his *Mediatorſhip*, wherein he now acts both as God and Man, for ever ceaſe, and a new *Form* of Government ſucceed, which will be adminiſtred by the *Deity* only, *i. e. by God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghoſt.* For we are not to ſuppoſe, that the Father only is then to *act* and reign, and the Son and the Holy Ghoſt ſit ſtill for ever, and do nothing; but the Meaning is, that, after the *mediatorial* Kingdom of Chriſt is at an End, there ſhall be then no Dominion exerciſed in the *celeſtial* State, but what is *eſſential* to the *Godhead*, in which the *Son* and the *Holy Ghoſt*, ſubſiſting together with the *Father*, ſhall for ever reign together with him, and ſo * *God ſhall be in all*, i. e. the *triune* Godhead ſhall reſume all Rule, and all Authority, ſhall do all Things, and govern all Things immediately by itſelf.

And his Surrender of it.

HEREIN indeed will appear a great *Diſparity* between the Father and the Son; but then it will be only in reſpect of the Son's *Humanity*, while his *Divinity* for ever continues the ſame, in Glory *equal*, and in Majeſty *co-eternal*. Nor are we to imagine, that even Chriſt's Humanity, by delivering up his *mediatorial* Kingdom, will be any way *degraded:* For as an *Ambaſſador*, after he is diſcharged from the Burden of his *Embaſſy*, does ſtill *retain* the Honour and Dignity of it; ſo the human Nature of Chriſt, after it has ſurrendred up the *Dominion*, with which it is now inveſted, ſhall ſtill remain as highly exalted in Honour, Dignity, and Beatitude, as ever.

By being God's Ambaſſador.

CHRIST indeed was God's *Legate*, and *Ambaſſador*, both under the *Jewiſh*, and *Chriſtian* Diſpenſation. As ſuch, he converſed with the ancient *Patriarchs*, brought *Iſrael* out of *Egypt*, conducted them through the Wilderneſs, and deſcended upon Mount *Sinai* at the *Delivery* of the *Law*; and as ſuch, having aſſum'd human Nature, he dwelt amongſt us, preach'd his Goſpel to us, and compleated the great Work of Man's *Redemption.* (*a*) But whenever did we hear of an *Ambaſſador*, or any other *Miniſter*, aſſuming the *Name* and *Titles* of *his King*, or demanding the ſame *Honour* and *Veneration* to be paid to him, that were only due to the Perſon

* The Context to the Paſſage is this —— *When all Things ſhall be ſubdued unto him, then ſhall the Son alſo himſelf be ſubject unto him, that did put all Things under him, that God may be all*; *i. e.* upon the Reſignation of Chriſt's *mediatorial* Kingdom, he, as *Man*, ſhall be ſubject to God in a different Manner, to what he was before. Before he was ſubject to him, as his *Deputy*, or *Viceroy*, to rule and preſide over his Church, to which Honour his *human* Nature was exalted in reward of his *meritorious* Obedience; but when this *Government* of his ſhall ceaſe, (as it muſt do, after the Day of Judgment) he will then, in the ſame Nature, become ſubject unto him in a more *private* Capacity, even as the *Preſidents* of the *Roman* Empire were ſubject to *Cæſar*, while they govern'd under him, but, when they render'd back their *Character*, they became his Subjects in a more *private* Station. Now when this Government of Chriſt's ſhall be at an End, the Text tells us farther, that, as Chriſt now, and in the preſent State of Things, *is all in all*, becauſe the Father, having *given him all Power in Heaven and Earth*, does all Things, and governs all Things by him; ſo, when this *Oeconomy* ceaſes, God alone *ſhall be all in all*; where the *Variation* of the *Perſon* is very remarkable: For it is not ſaid, that the *Son ſhall be ſubject to him, that did put all Things under him*, i. e. the Father, that he *may be all in all*, but *that God may be all in all*; whereas, according to the *common Rules* of Speech, had he meant the *Father only*, he ſhould have ſaid *he*, or the *Father*, of whom before he had been ſpeaking, and not *God*; but, by introducing *God*, he plainly meant to ſignify the *divine Eſſence*, wherein Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt do ſubſiſt, and which, at the Expiration of Chriſt's *mediatorial* Kingdom, was to reſume all Rule and Dominion to itſelf. *Scot*'s Mediator.

(*a*) *Fiddes*'s Body, Vol. I.

Perſon of his *Sovereign? (a) Ye believe in God*, ſays our Saviour; *believe alſo in me: (b) He that hath ſeen me, hath ſeen the Father*; *and, (c) if any Man love me, he will keep my Words, and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our Abode with him.* Is this a Stile proper, I do not ſay, for any *mere* Man, but for the higheſt and moſt perfect of any *created* Beings? In ſhort, that ſo much Weight ſhould be laid upon the Duty of *believing* in the Son, as well as in the Father, of *loving* the Son, of *honouring* him, and keeping his Words, together with other Characters of *Diſtinction*, proper only to a Perſon truely *divine*, can no otherwiſe be accounted for, than by ſuppoſing, that the Son was equal to the Father in all *eſſential* Perfections, and, conſequently, had a Right to the ſame Homage.

And in the Form of God, no Dimunition to his Godhead.

ST. *Paul* indeed, in his Epiſtle to the *Philippians*, tells us of *Jeſus Chriſt*, that *(d) he was in the Form of God*, which Expreſſion ſeems to be *equivalent* with that to the *Coloſſians*, where he calls him *(e) the Image of God*; thereby intimating, that he bore the *Figure* and *Reſemblance* of God, as truly and perfectly, as a *Son of Man* has all the *Features* and Lineaments belonging to human Nature. *The Form of God* therefore cannot ſimply denote his *perſonating*, or *repreſenting* God in any of the Inſtances above-mentioned, but does properly ſignify the *Reality* of his divine Nature, becauſe it immediately follows, that *he thought it no Robbery, i. e.* * knew, that he did not *wrongfully* or *unreaſonably* aſſume to himſelf, *to be equal with God.* The Truth is, *(f)* the Deſign of the Apoſtle, *(g)* in this whole Paſſage, is to magnify the great *Condeſcenſion* of God the Son, from the *higheſt* Degree of *Glory*, to the *loweſt* State of *Contempt* and Infamy; and, to illuſtrate this, it is reaſonable to ſuppoſe, that he ſhould begin with theMention of what he was in his moſt exalted *Capacity*. Now, his *perſonating* the Father, (which an *Angel* might do upon Occaſion) is not near ſo honourable a Circumſtance, as being *in the Form*, or *Image of God*; and therefore, if this be an Inſtance of more Honour, than what is contained in the Circumſtance of *perſonating* God, it is a plain Demonſtration, that St. *Paul* did not intend the *Form of God* in any ſuch *low* Senſe, as would only leſſen the Miracle of Chriſt's *Condeſcenſion*, and weaken the Force of his own *Argument*. In his Argument it is manifeſt, that he ſets the *Form of God*, and the *Form of a Servant* in *Contrapoſition*; and therefore, as himſelf interprets the *Form of a Servant* by being *(h) made in the Likeneſs of Man*, which is the ſame as being *really* and *truly* Man; ſo may we, from the very Force of the *Antitheſis*, conclude, that his being in the *Form of God* was intended to ſignify, that he was fully poſſeſſed of the divine Nature, or was *really* and *truly* God.

The Meaning of our Lord's Reply to the Jews.

OF this our bleſſed Saviour was fully *conſcious*; and therefore, when, upon his declaring himſelf to be *equal* with God, the *Jews* were for ſtoning him, tho', to divert their Indignation for the preſent, (becauſe the Time was not yet come, *(i) that he ſhould be delivered into the Hands of Men)* he took Occaſion to tell them, that his calling himſelf the Son of God was not ſo heinous a Crime, as they would make it ſince Perſons, of leſs Diſtinction and Character than himſelf, had been honour'd with the Appellation of *Gods*, without giving any juſt Offence; yet ſo far is he from denying the Matter, that, in the *Sequel* of his Diſcourſe, he maintains his *Co-equality* and *Identity* with the Father, by an Argument that was irrefragable, *(k) If I do not the Works of my Father, believe me not; but if I do, tho' ye belive not me, believe the Works, that ye may know, and believe that the Father is in me, and I in the Father.*

And to the Man who came to conſult him.

THIS is far from being a *Retractation* of his Pretenſions to a *real* Divinity: And, in like manner, *(l)* in his Anſwer to the Perſon, who came to conſult him, he does not deny himſelf to be *good*, in *Oppoſition* to God, but only in *Relation* to the Opinion, which the other had of him, who took him to be no more than a *mere* Man. *(m)* His whole Reply indeed is, what we call an Argument *ad hominem*, and our bleſſed Maſter was pleaſed very frequently to make uſe

(*a*) John xiv. 1. (*b*) Ver. 9. (*c*) Ver 23. (*d*) Phil. ii. 6. (*e*) Col. i. 15.

* The *ancienteſt* Verſions of the *New* Teſtament favour this Conſtruction: The *Greek* and *Latin* Fathers, from the *fourth* Century downwards, do as plainly countenance it: Nay, *Tertullian*, of the *ſecond* or *third* Century, the oldeſt Writer, that cites the Text, ſeems to have underſtood it in the ſame Senſe; as the Words, in ſtrict Propriety indeed, will bear no other. *Waterland*'s Ser. in Defence of Chriſt's Divinity.

(*f*) *Waterland* ibid. (*g*) Phil. ii. 5, &c. (*h*) Phil. ii. 7. (*i*) Luke ix. 44. (*k*) John x. 37, 38. (*l*) Mat. xvii. 19. 19. 17 (*m*) *Edwards*'s Theolog. Refer.

uſe of ſuch, becauſe it was beſt accommodated to the *Genius* and Apprehenſion of thoſe, he convers'd with. *Why calleſt thou me good, i. e.* if, according to " the Conceptions, that thou haſt of me, I be a Man " only, this *Title*, that thou giveſt me, " cannot, with any *Propriety*, belong to " me, becauſe none is *eſſentially*, *infinitely*, " and *abſolutely* good, but God. If therefore thou doeſt acknowledge me to be " *thus good*, thou muſt of Neceſſity own " my *Divinity* likewiſe, becauſe none, " after that Manner, is *good*, but God alone." This is the true and genuine Strain of our Saviour's Words, which are ſo far from *denying*, that they *inſinuate* to the Perſon, with whom he was in Conference, the Belief of his Divinity, and, by an artful Way of *Addreſs*, force him to acknowledge that he was in Reality God.

Of his doing nothing of himſelf.

GOD the Son indeed is ſo intimately *united* with the Father, as to exclude all Manner of *Separation* from him, and therefore, in his divine *Capacity*, he never *does* any Thing, but in Concert and Combination with him; and this may ſerve for a Reaſon of his ſaying, that (*a*) *of himſelf he did nothing:* But, to make this Matter more intelligible, we muſt obſerve, (as (*b*) a learned Author ſpeaks) " that it is *one* Thing " to underſtand the *Son of God*, *barely* and " *abſtractedly* for the *ſecond* Perſon in the " holy *Trinity*, or a Perſon truly *God*, and " *another* to underſtand him for the *Meſſias*, or the *ſecond* Perſon *incarnate*. To " ſay that the *ſecond* Perſon in the *Trinity*, " and who is truly God, cannot do ſomething, is *blaſphemous*; but to ſay the ſame " Thing of the Meſſias, who nevertheleſs " was the ſame with the *ſecond* Perſon in " the *Trinity*, is not ſo. For tho' the *ſecond* Perſon, conſider'd with relation to " the Deity, was *co-equal* with the *Father*, " and poſſeſſed of the ſame divine Perfections; yet as he was *God-man*, or conſider'd in the Capacity of the *Meſſias*, he " was a *Servant*, a *Deputy*, a *Meſſenger* of " the Father, and, having received *Authority* and Commands from him, was obliged *punctually* to follow his Orders, " and therefore could not go beyond his " Office or Commiſſion, either to ſpeak or " act *leſs or more*." To this Purpoſe we find him making frequent Declarations, that (*c*) *he ſpake nothing of himſelf, but the Father, who ſent him, gave him Commandment what he ſhould ſay, and what he ſhould ſpeak*; *for* (*d*) *my Doctrine*, ſays he, *is not mine, but his that ſent me*; and (*e*) *the Words, which I ſpeak unto you, I ſpeak not of myſelf, but the Father, that dwelleth in me*, he ſpeaks the Words, and *he does the Works:* From whence it appears, that *Jeſus*, conſider'd as the *Meſſias*, was empower'd to reveal and tranſact whatever his Father had given him in Charge, but no more, and that, as his Inſtructions came *primarily* from the Father, 'twas the Father, that ſpake in him, and by him.

And of his being ignorant *of the Day of Judgment.*

THERE is one Paſſage indeed in the Goſpels, which ſeems to denote a *Defect* in our Saviour's Knowledge, and conſequently an *Inferiority* in his Divinity: But whoever attends to the *Context*, as it occurs in (*f*) two of the Evangeliſts, will find, that our Lord's Confeſſion of his *Ignorance of the Day of Judgment* relates to his *human* Nature only, (in which reſpect his Knowledge might be *imperfect*, as well as that of other Men) and not to his *divine*, wherein the concurrent Voice of Scripture declares him to be *omniſcient*. *Of that Day and Hour knoweth not the Son*; but this Son, we muſt obſerve, is, all along, ſaid to be the *Son of Man*, who, *as ſuch*, took upon him the *Ignorance*, as well as other *Infirmities*, of our Nature, and not the *Son of God*, who, *as ſuch*, being of the ſame Nature and Subſtance with the Father, muſt have every divine Perfection, (and infinite Knowledge among the reſt) equal, and in common with him. When therefore our Saviour declares, that this great Event was known to his *Father only*, (*g*) his Intent was not to exclude his own divine Nature, and that of the Holy Ghoſt, (for *excluſive Terms* in Scripture are not always to be taken *rigidly*) but only every *Species* of created intelligent Beings, from a Participation in that Knowledge.

Reaſons given for it.

SUPPOSE then (as we well may do) that our Saviour ſpoke theſe Words with relation to his *human* Nature only, and not with reſpect to his *Divinity*, there is no Difficulty in conceiving, how he ſhould be ignorant of the *Day of Judgment*. To this Purpoſe it may not be amiſs to obſerve, that, whilſt our Saviour convers'd with us in the Fleſh, and followed the Courſe of his *Miniſtry* among Men, the *divine* Nature

(*a*) John viii. 28. (*b*) *Lightfoot* on the Place. (*c*) John xii. 49. (*d*) John vii. 18. (*e*) John xiv. 10.
(*f*) Matt. xxiv. and Mark xiii. (*g*) *Waterland*'s Ser. at Lady *Moyer*'s Lect.

ture, though closely united to the *human*, did not, at all Times, communicate its Efficacy to the *Manhood*; but at certain Seasons, and upon particular Occasions, was, as it were, *quiescent* in it, and, suspending its Influences towards it, left the *Manhood* to act alone. Now, if the *Godhead* of Christ did, at certain *Periods* of Time, suspend its Influences on the *Manhood* in him; it may well be presum'd, that the Time, when our Saviour thus declar'd his Ignorance of the Day of Judgment, was one of these Periods; that the Divinity in him did then forbear to communicate itself, in the same Manner, as it did at the Time of * his *Temptation*, and † *Crucifixion*; and so the *Ignorance*, which he here avers of himself, can be charg'd on his Humanity only.

OUR Saviour's Ignorance of the Day of Judgment might bear, however, another Interpretation. When the *Apostles*, a little before his *Ascension*, came to him with this Question, (*a*) *Wilt thou, at this Time, restore again the Kingdom of* Israel? his Reply was, *It does not belong to you to know the Times, and the Seasons, which the Father has put in his own Power*. He himself had, not long before, inform'd them, that his *Kingdom was not of this World*, and therefore he certainly knew, that neither *then*, nor at any other Time, was he to restore such a *temporal* Kingdom to *Israel*, as they vainly imagin'd; and yet the *Letter* of his Reply seems to import, that the *Knowledge*, necessary for the *Solution* of their Question, was what the Father had *reserv'd* in his *proper* or peculiar *Power*; (*b*) thereby however he could only mean, that the Father had not given it in Charge to any one, fully to explain the Time, and other Circumstances of his Son's Kingdom; and, in like manner, what he declares, concerning the Secret of the Day of Judgment, may possibly mean no more, than this; —— "That though, in the Course of his "Ministry, he had made Discovery of "many great and important Truths to "them, yet the Revelation of this par-"ticular *Mystery* was what the Father "had not given in Commission, either to "Men, to Angels, or even *the Son of* "*Man himself*."

ANY of these seems to be no *unnatural* Interpretation of our Saviour's Words: But to what Sense soever they are applied, they can never be urged as any *valid* Argument against the *Omniscience*, and, consequently, against the *Divinity* of the Son of God.

DISSERTATION VII.

The Truth, Consistency, and Comfort of the Catholick Scheme, in Relation to our Lord's Divinity.

THE *Divinity* of our blessed Saviour indeed is so *plainly* reveal'd in the Word of God, and so fully confirm'd by the Voice of all *Antiquity*, that it may justly exercise our Wonder, how any Man, who admits of the *Authority* of either, can possibly prevail with himself to *controvert*, or disbelieve it; but that the Scripture *must needs be fulfilled*, which foretold, that, even among Christians, (*c*) *many false Prophets and Teachers should arise, and deceive many*; nay, *that* (*d*) *they should bring in damnable Heresies, even denying the Lord, that bought them.*

The present Opposers of our Lord's Divinity.

THE first Person, that opposed this *Catholick* Truth, was *Cerinthus*, who, in the *earliest* Ages of the Church, poison'd several with his *Heresy*, before St. *John* wrote his Gospel; and this is the Reason, that we find that Apostle more *express* and *copious* in his Writings concerning the *Divinity* of Christ, than any of the other *Evangelists*. In the *second* Century, the same *Heresy* was reviv'd by *Theodotus*, and, after him, by *Sabellius*, *Plotinus*, &c. who severally taught that *Christ was only Man*; and, in the Beginning of the *fourth*, it appear'd again, though dress'd up in a different

* At the Time of our Saviour's *Temptation* by the Devil, we must suppose, that the *divine* Nature *forbore* to communicate its Assistance to the *Manhood*, and *suspended* its Influence upon it; because a Temptation (properly speaking) there cannot be, where the *divine Power* (incapable of being resisted) is supposed to be concern'd. *Stephens*'s Ser. Vol. I.

† At the Time of our Saviour's *Crucifixion and Death*, the *divine* Nature *withdrew* all Intercourse with the *human*, and left the Burden of Suffering to be borne by the *Manhood* only, in which Suffering it was impossible that the *Godhead* could bear any Share. *Stephens*'s Ser. Vol. I.

(*a*) Acts i. 6, 7. (*b*) *Twells*'s Ser. Vol. II. (*c*) Matt. xxiv. 11. (*d*) 2 Pet. ii. 1.

rent Manner, under the * Countenance of *Arius*. " He allowed Chriſt an *Exiſtence* " before all created Beings, but a *temporary* " Participation only of the divine Eſſence; " and, in Conformity to him, his Succeſ- " ſors, for many Ages, confeſs'd our Sa- " viour's *Pre-exiſtence* before the World's, " but denied his *Co-eternity* with the " Father, alledging, that *there was a* " *Time when he was not*, and that, in ſhort, " he was a Creature, and God's *Work-* " *manſhip*.

THE *Socinians*, who, about two hundred Years ago, began to make their Appearance, maintain'd, " That the ſupreme " Deity is *perſonally one*, and that our Lord " and Saviour had no Exiſtence before his " Birth of the bleſſed Virgin; that then " he became no more than *mere* Man, and " ſo continued, 'till being taken up into " Heaven, he was inveſted with an *infe-* " *rior* Kind of Divinity, and, by the Fa- " ther's Appointment and Deſignation, " made a *true* and *proper*, though not an " *eternal* God." Theſe are the *Hereſies*, which, at preſent, have the greateſt *Prevalency* amongſt us; and therefore, after we have conſidered their *Repugnancy* to the Word of God, and ſome of the *Abſurdities*, wherewith they are loaded, we ſhall better perceive the *Excellency* of the *Catholick* Scheme upon the Compariſon.

The Tenets of the Socinians confuted *from Scripture and Reaſon.*

THE *Socinians* ſay, that our bleſſed Lord had no Exiſtence before his *Conception* in the Virgin's Womb: But how comes he then to affirm of himſelf, that *(a) he came forth from the Father, when he came into the World*; that (*b*) *he came down from Heaven*, and would (*c*) *aſcend thither, where he was before*; that, (*d*) he *ſubſiſted before* Abraham *was born*, and (*e*) *had Glory* (or a moſt honourable State of Being) *with the Father, before the World was created?* How comes St. *Peter* to teſtify, that he had an Exiſtence *(f) before the Flood*, and *preached to the Diſobedient*, even *in the Days of* Noah? or St. *Paul* to aſſert, that (*g*) *by him were all Things created, that are in Heaven, and that are in the Earth*, which, as the *Cauſe* muſt be prior to the *Effect*, undoubtedly implies, that our bleſſed Lord had a real *Being* and Exiſtence, not only before his *Appearing* in the World, but even before the World *began*.

THE *Socinians* ſay again, that Chriſt was not a *God* by *Nature*, but by divine *Appointment* only: But when we find himſelf *aſſuming*, the ſacred Writers *aſſerting*, and Voices from Heaven *confirming that Title* to him; nay when, beſides this, we find ſuch other *Titles*, Honours, and *Attributes* every where aſcrib'd to him, as are proper and peculiar to the *ſupreme* Deity only, if we are not ſo reſolv'd againſt Conviction, as to accuſe the Scriptures of *Blaſphemy*, we cannot but acknowledge his *real* Communion in the divine Nature, that he is far from being a God merely by *Office* or *Deputation*, and thereupon be forced to cry out with St. *Thomas*, *My Lord, and my God.* (*h*) The Chriſtians of old, when reproach'd, both by *Jews* and *Gentiles* for worſhipping *Jeſus*, a Man, *a crucified, mortal Man*, as they uſed to call him, never denied the *Charge*, but vindicated their *Practice*, by aſſerting, that they ought to worſhip that *crucified Man*, becauſe he was *God*, as well as Man. To palliate the Matter, they never pretended, that the *Jeſus*, whom

* *Arius* was a *Presbyter* of the Church of *Alexandria*, who, upon the Death of *Achilles*, being diſappointed of the *Patriarchal Dignity*, and envying that *Alexander*, a Perſon remarkable for his Chriſtian *Zeal*, ſhould be promoted to it, ſet himſelf reſolutely to oppoſe him, and, in Contradiction to what he had wrote, advanced theſe Doctrines, —— " That God exiſted before he was *Father*, and was *prior* to the Son, not only " in *Order* of Nature, but of *Time* alſo: That the Son, though begotten of the Father, has not the ſame " *Eſſence* and Power, and Glory with him; is not made of his *Subſtance*, nor exiſts in his *Eſſence*, but is al- " together *different* both in Nature and Power, though formed to the perfect *Likeneſs* of it: That he is a God, " by *Conſtitution* and Appointment, and as the Father imparts ſome Divinity to him; and that, in ſhort, he " is *made*, *created*, and eſtabliſhed, tho' in a more ſublime and *myſterious* Way, than any other Part of the " Creation." What the *modern Arians* hold, 'tis difficult to ſay, becauſe they are ſo uncertain, and fluctuating in their Principles. " They ſometimes acknowledge, that Chriſt was not only *before* the Worlds, but that he " was the *inſtrumental* Cauſe, under God the Father, of making the Worlds: Sometimes, that he made all " Things out of Nothing by his own *inherent* Power, but this at the *Command* of his Father, who appointed " him to be *Creator*: Nay, and ſometimes too, that he is *God*, or a divine Perſon, but not God *co equal* with " the Father; and that he is to be worſhipped, but not with *abſolute*, ſupreme Worſhip." But, as it is moſt certain, there can be no *Medium* between *Creator* and *Creature*, nor any *lawful* Worſhip, but to the *Creator*, 'tis as certain, that, if he is the *Creator*, he is intitled to *all* Worſhip; if a *Creature*, to *none*. *Wheatley* on the Creeds. *Waterland*'s Defence, and *Snape*'s Ser. Vol III.

(*a*) John xvi. 28. (*b*) John xi. 13. (*c*) John vi. 61. (*d*) John viii. 38. (*e*) John xvii. 5. (*f*) 1 Pet. iii. 20. (*g*) Col. i. 16. (*h*) *Fiddes*'s Body Vol. I.

whom they worſhipped, was only *metaphorically* called God, a God in a *large* and improper Senſe, a God by *Office*, and *Inſtitution* only: No; they had not *ſo learned Chriſt*. His *real Divinity* was a *ſettled Point*, an *Article* of Faith with them; and, in the *Profeſſion* and Defence of this, they perſiſted ſo reſolutely, *that* (*a*) *neither Tribulation, nor Diſtreſs, nor Perſecution, nor Famine, nor Nakedneſs, nor Peril, nor the Sword, were ever able to* make them recant it.

As likewiſe of the Arians.

THE *Arians* affirm, that our bleſſed Saviour is not God of the ſame eternal *Eſſence* with the Father: But when we find, that he is ſtiled abſolutely (*b*) *the Beginning*, which excludes all Time previous to his Exiſtence; the divine (*c*) *Word, which was in the Beginning, i. e.* before any conceivable Date, and conſequently, from all Eternity; (*d*) *the eternal Life, which was with the Father*; together (*e*) with other Appellations, that always denote an *Eternity*, and *Immortality* proper to God: When we find, that *all Things were made by him*, and, as nothing can make itſelf, he, conſequently, was *unmade*, and, being unmade, muſt neceſſarily be eternal; that he was truly ſubſiſting (*f*) *in the Form of God, and was equal with God*, before he was in the Nature of Man; that (*g*) *his Goings-forth*, in ſhort, *have been of old, even from everlaſting*, foraſmuch (*h*) as he has *neither Beginning of Days, nor End of Life*; we cannot but infer, that the Being, which he had before his Conception of the *Virgin*, was not any *created*, but a *divine* Eſſence, and that himſelf, conſequently, was not any *inferior* or *ſubordinate* God, but a God *co-equal* and *co-eternal* with the Father. And indeed, (*i*) an *inferior* and *ſubordinate* God, a *made* and *created* God, a *temporary* and *precarious* God, in the common Senſe of Mankind, muſt be no God at all: *Abſolute* Perfection and Independency are inſeparably connected to the Idea of a Perſon, that is truly God; and therefore to eſteem him a *Creature*, whom the Scriptures ſtile *Creator*, is *impious*; to confeſs his Generation *from all Ages*, and yet not from *ſtrict* Eternity, is mere *trifling* with Words; and to find out a *Medium* between *Creator* and *Creature* is a Thing *impoſſible*.

Their manifold Abſurdities.

THE holy Scripture informs us, that *the Son created all Things that are, and were created*; but the *Arians* tell us, that the Son himſelf is but a *Creature*: Either therefore he muſt have created himſelf, which is a plain *Contradiction*, or a mere Creature may be inveſted with the Power of Creation, which is a Thing *inconceivable*. (*k*) *Before me there is no God form'd, neither ſhall there be any after me*, is the *Declaration*, which the Almighty makes; but all this is denied by the *Arians*, who maintain, that a Perſon, *properly God*, was produc'd in a Time ſubſequent to the Exiſtence of the *eternal* God. (*l*) *I am the Lord*, ſays God again, *that is my Name, and my Glory will not I give to another*; and yet this Glory the *Arians* extort from him, when they acknowledge, that the Son is not the *ſupreme* God, nor God in the ſame Senſe with the Father, and yet pay him divine Worſhip. (*m*) *The Lord, he is God in Heaven above, and upon the Earth beneath, there is none elſe*, ſays his Servant *Moſes*; but here the *Arians* ſubſtitute another, for, when they talk of a God, that is of an *inferior* and ſubordinate Species, *i. e.* of a diſtinct and ſeparate *Eſſence*, they plainly declare that there are *two Gods*: (*n*) So that, to avoid the *Shadow* and Appearance of a *Plurality* of Deities, they run directly into it; and (notwithſtanding their *Diſtinction* of divine Worſhip, into *ſupreme* and *ſubordinate*, *abſolute* and *relative*, *Subtilties*, that the Word of God knows nothing of) fall into downright *Idolatry* likewiſe, by worſhipping a Creature, (*o*) beſides *the Creator, who is bleſſed for ever. Amen.*

As likewiſe of the Socinians.

THE like *Abſurdities*, and Inconſiſtences are equally chargeable upon the *Socinian* Scheme: For what can be a more flagrant Contradiction, than that a *Creature* of Yeſterday ſhould afterwards become *God*, a *finite* Being be made *infinite*, and the *incommunicable* Properties of the Deity be actually communicated to another? The *Abettors* of this Scheme are very averſe to the Being of *two Gods*, and with good Reaſon they may: But how high ſoever they may carry the *Prerogatives* of the *ſupreme* and *independent* God, and how nicely ſoever they may diſtinguiſh between a God by *Nature*, and a God by *Office* or Appointment; (*p*) yet, as long as the

(*a*) Rom. viii. 35, 38. (*b*) Rev. iii. 14. (*c*) John i. 30. (*d*) John i. 2. (*e*) Vid. Rev. i. 11. xxi. 6. xxii. 13. (*f*) Phil. ii. 6. (*g*) Micah v. 2. (*h*) Heb. vii. 13. (*i*) *Stephens*'s Ser. at a Viſitation. (*k*) Iſa. xlv. 10. (*l*) Iſa. xlii 9. (*m*) Deut. iv. 39. (*n*) *Tillotſon*'s Ser. Vol. I. (*o*) Rom. i. 24. (*p*) *Stephens*'s Ser. at an Ordination.

the Father is call'd God, and the Son allow'd to be God, (however ſubordinate, dependent, and inferior he may be ſaid to be) it will ſtill be undeniable, that they muſt be *two Gods*, becauſe they are ſuppoſed to be two *diſtinct* Subſtances, and not one *individual* Being. Nay ſome of their own *(a)* Authors are not aſham'd to aſſert, that there are more *true* Gods, than one. They allow that *they adore a made God*, and maintain, that, *to acknowledge only one ſupreme God, and to worſhip him alone, is renouncing Chriſtianity, and relapſing into Judaiſm:* Doctrines, that ought to be *deteſted* by all ſober Chriſtians, as utterly *ſubverſive* of our holy Religion, and plainly *introductive* of *Pagan* Idolatry and *Polytheiſm.*

Their forced *Interpretations of Scripture.*

And equal to the *Abſurdity*, and *Impiety* of their Doctrines, is their *monſtrous* Manner of *interpreting* the Scriptures, in order to ſupport them. Thus, in expounding the firſt Verſe of St. *John*'s Goſpel, they ſay, that, *in the Beginning was the Word*, ſignifies no more, than that Chriſt *was*, when he was born; that, *the Word was with God*, implies nothing elſe, but that Chriſt was * taken up into Heaven to receive Inſtructions for his ſubſequent Errand; that, *the Word was God*, intimates only that he was *God's Meſſenger*, and that *all Things were made by him, and without him nothing was made, that was made*, ſignifies no more, than that he was to preach the Goſpel, by virtue of which Men were to be made *new Creatures*. Thus, by the Help of a bold Suppoſition or two, they get clear, as they think, of every *Difficulty*, and triumph not a little in their boaſted *Expoſition*, how contrary ſo ever it may be to the plain and obvious Meaning of the Text, as well as the Senſe of the Chriſtian Church, in all Ages, down to this Time.

The Catholick Syſtem eaſy in its Interpretation.

The *Catholick* Syſtem (praiſed be God) ſtands in need of no ſuch *forced* and *unnatural* Interpretations. Its Conſtruction of the Paſſage now before us is plain, and ſimple: *(b)* "*In the Beginning*, before there was "any Creature, (and conſequently from all "Eternity) the *Word* (as the *Jews* called "the *Son of God)* exiſted; and this *Word* "was no *diſtinct ſeparate* Power, eſtranged "from God, or unacquainted with him, "but he was *with God*, and himſelf alſo "*very God*, not another God, but another "Perſon only; of the ſame Nature and "Subſtance with the Father, and together "with him, the joint Creator of the *Uni-*"*verſe.*" And, as its *Interpretations* are eaſy and natural, ſo are its *Principles conſiſtent* and *uniform. (c)* It maintains, that the divine Nature is *numerically one*; but then it aſſerts (as the Force of Scripture makes it aſſert) that in this Nature there are *three diſtinct* Perſons: It maintains, that the divine Nature is *indiviſible*; but then it aſſerts, that this Nature was *communicated* to the Son from all Eternity, and that, as, in this Communication, there was no *Diviſion*, or Separation of the Nature, ſo the ſame *Unity* is ſtill *preſerv'd*, and the *Diſtinction* of Perſons left *inviolate:* It maintains, that the Father is *firſt* and chief, the *Head* and Fountain of the Deity, and the Son, in ſome Senſe, *ſubordinate* to him; but then it aſſerts, that this is a Subordination not of *Nature*, but of *Perſons* only: The Father, it maintains (as our Creed profeſſes) *is Maker of Heaven and Earth*; but it aſſerts, at the ſame Time, that the Son is *joint Creator* with him; for, being of the ſame Nature and Subſtance, he is ſo *nearly* allied,

Uniform in its Principles.

(*a*) Particularly *Wolzengenius* and *Smalcius.*

* St. *John*'s Expreſſion, that *the Word was with God*, perplexed the *Socinians* for ſome Time, how to make Senſe of it according to their own *Scheme*, 'till at length they invented this Story, *viz.* That our Saviour, ſome Time before his Entrance upon his publick *Miniſtry* (they cannot poſſibly agree preciſely when) was taken up into Heaven, where he had the Will of God revealed to him, and was afterwards ſent down from Heaven again to make it known to the World. But this is a pure *Fiction*, only to ſerve an *Hypotheſis*, which could not be maintained without it. "For can any Man imagine, that, in ſo exact an Hiſtory of our Saviour's Life, "written by ſeveral Hands, the Relation of ſo momentous a Matter, as *this*, ſhould be wholly omitted? That "we ſhould have a particular Account of his being carried into *Egypt* in his *Infancy*, and of the Time, when "he was brought back from thence; of his *diſputing* in the Temple with the *Jewiſh Doctors*, and putting them, "*Silence*, when he was but *twelve* Years old; a punctual Relation of his being *baptized* by *John*, *led* by the "*Spirit* into the Wilderneſs, there *tempted* by the Devil, and thence *carried* by him from one Place to ano-"ther; but not one Word of his being *taking up* by God into Heaven, or of his *coming down* again from "thence; not the leaſt Intimation given, either of the *Time*, or any other *Circumſtance* of ſo memorable a "Tranſaction, upon which (according to the *Socinians*) the *Authority* of his *Miſſion*, and *the Divinity* of his "Doctrine did ſo much depend." 'Tis ſtrange, I ſay, that ſo many Things, of much leſs Moment, ſhould be ſo *minutely* and exactly reported, and not the leaſt Mention made, by any of the *Evangeliſts*, of this great and important Affair *Tillotſon*'s Ser. Vol. I.

(*b*) *Waterland*'s Defence. (*c*) *Stephens*'s Ser. at a Viſitation.

allied, and ſo cloſely united to the Father, that nothing could be the Work of the one, without being, at the ſame Time, the Work of both: Prayers and Supplications, Praiſes and Thankſgivings it offers up *primarily* to God the Father, as having a *Priority of Order* among the divine Perſons; but it looks upon the other two as *equally* intitled to its *Homage* and Adoration, and *intentially* underſtands them, even where they are not *verbally* mention'd.

And found in its Worſhip.

SUCH is the *Catholick* Syſtem, and ſuch is the *Service* we perform, when we pray according to the *Liturgy* of our Church, where God is acknowledged in all his great and glorious *Attributes*, and yet a due *Proviſion* made for obſerving a proper *Subordination*; where we frequently implore the Almighty *Father*, through the *Merits* and Mediation of his *Son*, to grant us the *Aſſiſtance* of his *holy Spirit*, to ſtrengthen and confirm, to guide and comfort us; but we do not forget, that they alſo are *Objects* of Adoration; that all divine Perfections ought equally to be aſcribed to them; and, accordingly, on proper Occaſions, we ſupplicate and invoke, we praiſe and magnify them, we give Thanks and Glory to them, in conjunction with the Father. So worſhipped the *primitive* Saints and *Martyrs*; ſo worſhip the *Hoſts of Heaven*; ſuch Worſhip has continued through all Ages of the Church; and ſuch Worſhip we have Reaſon to pray that it may continue, *'till Time ſhall be no more.*

The Comforts of the Chriſtian Religion upon the Preſumption of our Lord's Divinity, and its Diſconſolation without it.

IN the Worſhip and Service of Heaven, *the four and twenty Elders* are repreſented as *(a) falling down before the Lamb, having every one of them Harps, and golden Vials, full of Odours, which are the Prayers of Saints; and ſaying, thou art worthy of all Glory and Honour, for thou waſt ſlain, and haſt redeemed us to God by thy Blood, out of every Kindred, and Tongue, and People, and Nation. All People and Nations* were at a Loſs for a *proper Sacrifice* to make Atonement for their Tranſgreſſions; but, in *the Fulneſs of Time*, God ſent forth his Son, who, *(b) through the eternal Spirit, offered himſelf without Spot*; and, being of the ſame *Nature* and Eſſence with the *Father*, by his *perſonal* Dignity derived an infinite Value upon the Sacrifice, making it more than ſufficient for the *Expiation* of the Sins of the whole World. *All People and Nations* were at a Loſs for a *powerful Mediator* to preſent their Petitions, and to make Interceſſion for them at the *Throne of the Majeſty on high*; but *(c) Jeſus Chriſt the Righteous*, the ſame who was *a Propitiation for our Sins*, is become *our Advocate with the Father*, and therefore, *(d) having ſuch an High-Prieſt over the Houſhold of God, we may draw near unto him with a true Heart, and a full Aſſurance of Faith.* Upon a *(e)* Suppoſition, that our Saviour is, in *Reality*, the *Son of God*, we need not wonder, that his *Oblation* of himſelf was ſo *precious* in his Father's Sight, and his *Interceſſion* for us is ſo *prevalent*; for what could God refuſe to a Perſon of the ſame Eſſence and Dignity with himſelf, ſoliciting and ſuing on our Behalf? What *Debts* might not ſo rich a *Price* diſcharge? What *Anger* could not ſo noble a *Sacrifice* appeaſe? But now, upon a contrary Suppoſition, all our *Expectations* of this kind are fruſtrated: *(f) Chriſt is dead in vain*, and *(g) we are ſtill in our Sins:* For what *Efficacy* can his Blood have towards the *Remiſſion* of them? What *Atonement* can the Sufferings of a *mortal* Man make for the Iniquities of us all? If he is in Heaven, (and if he be not the Son of God, 'tis hardly preſumable that he ſhould be in Heaven) he can only appear in the Capacity of a *common Saint*, and, as *(h) Abraham is ignorant of us*, of what *Validity* can his Interceſſion be? If he be truly the Son of God, we may confide in this, that *(i) his Strength will be made perfect in our Weakneſs*, and therefore, in all our *ſpiritual Wants* and Exigencies, we may *(k) come boldly unto the Throne of Grace, that we may obtain Mercy, and find Grace to help us in the Time of Need*; and *if we abound in the Work of the Lord*, we may depend upon his Promiſe, that *(l) our Labour ſhall not be in vain*, becauſe *(m) there is a Crown of Righteouſneſs laid up for us.* But now, upon a contrary *Suppoſition*, his *Grace* is a mere *Notion*, and all his *Promiſes* empty *Bubbles*: In vain are our Petitions and Supplications for the *one*; in vain are our Hopes and Expectations of the *other*. We muſt neceſſarily *die in our Sins*, without any Proſpect of a future

 Immortality,

(a) Rev. 8. 1, 9. (b) Heb. ix. 13. (c) 1 John ii. 1, 2. (d) Heb. x. 21, 22. (e) *Barrow* on the Creed. (f) Gal. ii 21. (g) 1 Cor. xv. 17. (h) Iſa lxiii. 16. (i) 2 Cor. xii. 9. (k) Heb. iv. 16. (l) 1 Cor. xv. 84. (m) 2 Tim. iv. 8.

Immortality, and the poor Conſolation left us, is only this, — that our *Being* may be extinct, and our Souls, at their Departure, may poſſibly *vaniſh into the ſoft Air*.

In ſhort, if *Jeſus* be the Son of God, the *Chriſtian* Religion is the moſt amiable, rational, and conſiſtent *Scheme*, that ever appeared in the World; but if he be *not*, it is an *Heap* of confuſed *Nonſenſe*, and Self-contradiction. Keep Chriſt's *Divinity* in it, and it is truly a *Light from Heaven*, and *(a) glad Tidings of the Kingdom of God*; but if once you remove *that* from it, 'tis all *Gloomineſs* and *Darkneſs*, all *Melancholy* and *Deſperation*; and therefore ſuch Perſons, as attempt to do *this*, and to juſtify themſelves by *forced* Interpretations of Scripture in ſo doing, deſerve to be accounted the *Enemies* of Mankind (of the *Chriſtian* World more eſpecially) as much, as if they endeavoured to extinguiſh the *Light* of the *Sun*, walking, in the Midſt of the *Firmament*, *in all its Brightneſs*.

SECT. IV. * Our LORD.

The EXPOSITION.

AFTER the divine *Filiation*, or the near and intimate *Relation*, which our bleſſed *Lord* has to the *ſupreme God*, as *his only Son*; the laſt *Branch* of this *Article* puts us in mind of his *Juriſdiction*, and *Dominion* over us, as he is our *Lord*: For *though* (according to *common* Acceptation)(*b*) *there be Gods many, and Lords many, yet to us there is but one God the Father, and one Lord* Jeſus Chriſt.

The Meaning of the Word Lord.

The Word *Lord* ſignifies a *Perſon*, who, either by *Birth*, or *Acquiſition*, is poſſeſſed of a *ſovereign* Power and Authority over others; has a Right to preſcribe *Rules* for their Conduct and Behaviour; to enquire into the Obſervance or Violation of his *Mandates*; to call his *Vaſſals* to an Account, either by himſelf or his *Deputies*; to reward the Faithful, and to puniſh the Rebellious. It is ſuppoſed indeed to be of the ſame Import with the *Hebrew* Name *Jehovah*, which ſignifies the *Independency*, and uncontroulable *Efficacy* of God, and is a Title of ſuch *ſuperlative* Excellence, that † two *Roman* Emperors refuſed to bear it, and, by their publick *Edicts*, forbad the Application of it to them upon any Account.

To our bleſſed Saviour however it belongs in a *peculiar* Manner: And, as the Name of *God*, tho' common to all the *Trinity*, is generally attributed to the *Father*, as the *Root* and *Fountain* of the Deity; ſo the Title of *Lord*, tho' juſtly applicable to the other *two*, ſeems, in ſome meaſure, to be appropriated to God *the Son*, who is the *Second* in Order among theſe divine Perſons: And the Reaſons for this *peculiar* Application we may poſſibly perceive, when we have enquir'd a little into the *Grounds* and Foundations of this his *Dominion* over us.

That the Meſſiah was to be ſuch.

That the promis'd *Meſſiah*, when he appear'd in the World, was to be a Perſon of great Eminence, and inveſted with Sovereign *Authority*, is evident from *ſeveral*, but more eſpecially from the *Evangelical* Prophet *Iſaiah*, in that famous Prediction of his; (*c*) *Unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given, and the Government ſhall be upon his Shoulder, and his Name ſhall be called Wonderful, Counſellor, the mighty God,*

(*a*) Luke viii. 1.

* Since the intended Meaning of this Part of the Article is, ſolemnly to declare thereby, that *Jeſus Chriſt* is the Lord and Governor of *all*, but more particularly of us *Chriſtians*, in Oppoſition to the Devil, his Kingdom, and Empire; and ſince every Perſon does, at his Baptiſm, openly profeſs, that Chriſt is the *Lord*, in Oppoſition to the Devil, whom he has conquer'd; it is very evident, that, as this Profeſſion was the Practice of the Church from the very *firſt*, this Branch of the Article was *originally* in the firſt Creeds, and had its Beginning with Chriſtianity itſelf. Crit. Hiſt. of the Apoſtles Creed.

(*b*) 1 Cor. viii. 6.

† Theſe were *Auguſtus* and *Tiberius*; and their Hiſtorians, *Suetonius* and *Dion*, tell us, that the Cauſe of their declining it, was *Fear*, leſt, at that *Conjuncture* of Time, when their Affairs as yet were unſettled, they ſhould be thought to affect the *Title* (tho' they really had the Power) of *Kings*, which was a Name deteſted by the *Romans*. But *Oroſius* ſeems to have found out a better Reaſon for their *Refuſal*, when he tells us, that this was done by God's ſpecial *Providence*, rather than any *Policy* of theſe Princes: "For ſince Chriſt, "(as he ſays) during the Reign of theſe two *Emperors*, had aſſum'd our Nature, and did actually live amongſt "us, it was not fitting, that any Man ſhould take upon him the Name of Lord, whilſt the undoubted "Lord of all Mankind was converſant here upon Earth. Oroſ. Hiſt. L. 6. C. 21.

(*c*) Iſa. ix. 6.

*God, * the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.*

Our Saviour so call'd

THAT our blessed Lord, when he took upon him human Nature, and had enter'd into his *Ministerial* Office, fulfill'd the *Character*, which the Prophet here gives him; assum'd to himself *(a)* the Title of *Lord* and *King*, nay, even *(b)* before the Tribunal of *Pontius Pilate*, asserted it; made publick Declarations of *(c)* his *universal* Power; told his Disciples, that *(d) all Things were delivered unto him by the Father*, and exercis'd, all along, an *uncontroulable* Dominion in the many miraculous Works, which he did; no one can be ignorant, that is any way conversant in the *History* of his Life. He indeed, in his great Humility, affected no *State*, or pompous Appellations; but when we find his Apostles calling him *(e)* the *Lord of all*, *(f) the Lord both of the Dead and Living*, *(g) the Lord of Glory*, *(h) the Lord of Heaven*, *(i) the Prince of Life*, *(k) the Prince of the Kings of the Earth*, and *(l) the blessed and only Potentate, King of Kings, and Lord of Lords*, we cannot but conclude, that he is the Person, whom the Prophet *(m) saw in the Night Visions, and to whom was given Dominion, and Glory, and a* Kingdom, *that all People, Nations, and Languages should serve him.*

And was such both in Respect of his Divinity.

AND indeed, if we consider him in the *Capacity* of the *Son of God*, and of the same Essence and Perfections with him, as he is appointed *the (n) Heir of all Things*, and *(o) set on his Father's right Hand in heavenly Places, he must needs be far above all Principality, and Power, and Might, and Dominion, and every Name, that is named, not only in this World, but also in that which is to come.* By his *Hand* we were all created at first; by his *Power* we are continually upheld in Being; by his *Providence* we are every Day sustain'd; by his *Goodness* crown'd with Blessings, and by his gracious *Protection* secur'd from Harms; in short, *(p) in him we live, and move, and have our Being*; and therefore, upon these Accounts, he has the same Title, with the Father, to an absolute Dominion over us, as being *the Lord of all his Creatures.*

And Humanity.

IF we consider him in the *Capacity* of the *Son of Man*, we shall soon perceive, that, in Regard to the Excellency of his *Person*, and the Merit of his *Performances*, God conferr'd upon him, *(q)* partly while he liv'd on Earth, and partly after his *Death* and Resurrection, a *super-eminent* Degree of Power. For thus we find him, *while on Earth*, exercising the most *sovereign Acts (r)* of making, reforming, and repealing Laws; the *Prerogative (s)* of forgiving Sins; *(t)* the *Administration* of Justice and Judgment; and *(u)* the *Power* of dispensing both Rewards and Punishments; instituting *Sacraments*, gathering *Disciples*, ordaining *Apostles*, appointing their *Assistants*, teaching *the Doctrine of the Kingdom*, and laying the Foundation of his Church, in such a Manner, that *(x) the Gates of Hell should not prevail against it.* Thus we find him, *upon his Resurrection*, manifesting himself to his Apostles, and many of his Disciples; giving them *Commission* to go and preach to all Nations; instructing them in the Nature of his *Kingdom*, and their Ministry; and, at his Departure, *(y) blessing them*, and *(z)* promising his Presence with them, *even unto the End of the World:* And thus we find him, *upon his Ascension*, sending down the *Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost*; revealing more fully the *Mysteries* of the Gospel; and beginning his *Intercession* for us at the *Throne of Grace*; so that, from thence forward, by him are all our *Services*, *Petitions*, and Thanksgivings presented to the Father; by him all *Pardons*, and special Blessings are dispens'd, and dispos'd of; and by him *i. e.* in his *Name*, and through his *Merits*, all the rich Promises of the Gospel ratified, and confirm'd. Good Reason, therefore, had the *Apostle*

* This Phrase, as it lies in our *Translation*, is very apt to be mistaken: For, if thereby be understood, that the *Son* is *Father*, this would be plainly *confounding the Persons* of the Father, and the Son, and (by a manifest Absurdity) making the Son to be *the Father of himself*. This Manner of Speaking is so much the worse; because there were, in the *primitive* Times, certain *false Teachers*, who did *so speak*, denying our Saviour to have any real *Being* at all, and making the Son to be nothing else, but merely *another Name* for the Father. That therefore no *Umbrage* may be given to any such Doctrine, we must suppose, that the true Rendering of these Words of the Prophet, is, not *the Everlasting Father*, but the *Father*, or *Lord of the future everlasting Age*, or the Age of the Gospel, concerning which the Apostle declares, That to *Christ* only, and *not to Angels*, hath God *put in Subjection this Age to come*, Heb. xxv. *Clarke*'s Ser. Vol. 5.

(a) John xiii. 13. *(b)* John xviii. 37. *(c)* Matt. xxviii. 18. *(d)* Luke x. 22. *(e)* Acts x. 36. *(f)* Rom. xiv 9. *(g)* 1 Cor. xii.. 8. *(h)* 1 Cor. xv. 47. *(i)* Acts iii. 15. *(k)* Rev. i. 5. *(l)* 1 Tim. vi. 15. *(m)* Dan. vii. 13. *(n)* Heb. i. 1. *(o)* Eph. i. 20, 21. *(p)* Acts xvii. 28. *(q) Pearson* and *Barrow* on the Creed. *(r)* Matt. xii. 6, 8. *(s)* Matt. ix. 16. *(t)* Acts xvii. 31. *(u)* Matt. xvi. 27. *(x)* Matt. xvi. 18. *(y)* Luke xxiv. 50. *(z)* Matt. xxviii. 20.

Apoſtle to apply the Prediction of the *Pſalmiſt* to our Saviour's Caſe, and to (*a*) *let the Houſe of* Iſrael *know aſſuredly, that God had made that ſame Jeſus, whom they had crucified, both Lord and Chriſt.*

This ſhewn from the ſeveral Notions *of the Word* Lord.

For, in what Notion ſoever we take the Word *Lord*, either as a *Prince* over Subjects, a *Maſter* over Servants, a *Preceptor* over Scholars, a *Leader* over Followers, or as a Perſon ſingularly *eminent* over ſuch, as are his *Inferiors*, we ſhall ſoon be convinced, that he has a lawful *Title* to Dominion over us. For, has a *Prince* an Authority over his *Subjects*, to reward the *Loyal*, and puniſh the *Rebellious*? With this God Almighty inveſted his Son, when he (*b*) *gave him a Name, that is above every Name*, (*c*) *committed* to him *all Judgment*, and (*d*) *made him to be Head over all Things to the Church.* Has a *Maſter* a Controul in his *Houſhold*, to appoint them their Proportion of Work, and to *give them their Meat in due Seaſon*? Of Chriſt, ſays the Apoſtle, (*e*) *is the whole Family in Heaven and Earth nam'd*; and, as he *giveth liberally, and upbraideth not*, and has committed to each *Domeſtick* his *ſeveral Talents* to improve, (*f*) *bleſſed is that Servant, whom his Lord, when he cometh, ſhall find ſo doing.* Has a *Preceptor* a Right over his *Scholar*, to inſtruct his Underſtanding, and direct his Practice? (*g*) *Ye call me Maſter and Lord*, ſays our Saviour, *and ye ſay well, for ſo I am*; and therefore he certainly expects of us, that we ſhould have his Example ever in our Eye, and, (*h*) *caſting down Imaginations, and every Thing, that exalteth itſelf againſt the Knowledge of God, ſhould learn of him*, (*i*) *in whom are hid all the Treaſures of Wiſdom and Knowledge.* Has a *Leader*, or chief Officer the abſolute *Direction* of the Men under his Command? Chriſt is (*k*) *the Captain of our Salvation*, and therefore his Orders we muſt obſerve, and his Conduct follow, if we would (*l*) *fight the good Fight, and finiſh our Courſe with Joy.* In ſhort, Chriſt is (*m*) *the chief Shepherd*, and (*n*) *Biſhop of our Souls*; (*o*) the *Apoſtle, and High-Prieſt of our Profeſſion*; (*p*) the Redeemer of our Lives, and (*q*) Vanquiſher of our Enemies; and therefore, having (*r*) *in all Things ſuch a Pre-eminence*, his Right and Power to command and govern us muſt be *indiſputable.*

And the ſeveral Titles *to Dominion.*

For let us conſider a little farther, is the *Power of Protection* a Ground for this Government? He who by Nature is God Almighty, who can do all Things, and whom nothing can reſiſt, is certainly able to defend, and (*s*) *to ſave to the uttermoſt them that come to God through him.* Is *Right of Conqueſt* a proper Foundation of Dominion? Since he has ſubdued the Enemies that enſlaved us, and, (*t*) *having ſpoiled Principalities and Powers, made a Shew of them openly, triumphing over them on the Croſs*, we are no longer at our own *Diſpoſal*, but are become *Acceſſions* to his Victory, and fall, of courſe, under his Dominion. Is *Purchaſe*, or Payment, a good Title to the Poſſeſſion of any Thing? When we had loſt our Liberty, and were reſerv'd for Puniſhment, he laid down a *Ranſom* for us; (*u*) *he died for us all, that we, who henceforth live, ſhould not live to ourſelves, but unto him, that died for us, and, being bought* (*x*) *with a Price, ſhould glorify God in our Body, and in our Spirit, which are God's.* Is *natural or acquir'd Merit any* Pretenſion to Power and Precedency? The Performances of Chriſt's Patience and Obedience were ſo pleaſing in the Sight of God, that, becauſe he *gave his Back to the Smiters, and hid not his Face from Shame*, but (*y*) *poured out his Soul unto Death, God divided him a Portion with the Great, and he did divide the Spoil with the Strong*, as the Prophet expreſſes it. Are *Bounty* and *Goodneſs*, *Power* and *Authority*, the Procurers of Reſpect and Dependence among Men? How ought we then to reverence and obey our Lord, (*z*) whoſe *Sovereignty*, and ſupreme Dominion over us gives him a Right to *demand*, and whoſe continual *Mercy* and Goodneſs towards us gives him Reaſon to *expect*, that we ſhould, in an *equal* Senſe of both *Duty* and *Gratitude*, pay all poſſible Homage and Submiſſion to him. Once more, does our *own Election*, and voluntary *Compact* bind us to ſubmit to the Rule and Diſpoſal of another? To *Chriſt* we have *vow'd* perpetual *Fealty* and Allegiance, as to our lawful Prince; to him we have promis'd an intire Subjection, and a ſincere Obedience

(*a*) Acts ii. 34, 36. (*b*) Phil. ii. 9. (*c*) John v. 22. (*d*) Eph. i. 22. (*e*) Eph. iii. 15. (*f*) Matt. xxiv. 49. (*g*) John xiii. 13. (*h*) 2 Cor. x. 5. (*i*) Col. ii. 3. (*k*) Heb. ii. 10. (*l*) 1 Tim. vi. 12. (*m*) 1 Pet. v. 4. (*n*) Pet ii. 20. (*o*) Heb. iii. 1. (*p*) Heb. ix. 12. (*q*) 1 Cor. xv. 25. (*r*) Col. i. 18. (*s*) Heb. vii. 25. (*t*) Col. ii. 15. (*u*) 2 Cor. v. 15. (*x*) 1 Cor. vi. 20. (*y*) Iſa. liii. 12. (*z*) *Clarke's*

Obedience to his Laws; for him we have *renounced* all other *Maſters*, yea, and reſign'd all Claim to any Liberty or Power over ourſelves; for him we have engaged to forſake all Things, to follow him as our *Captain*, and to *fight* under his *Banner* againſt the common Enemies of his Glory, and our Salvation. All this we have done at our *Baptiſm* in a moſt ſolemn Manner, and, in every religious Performance afterwards, we confirm and ratify our Obligation. " If therefore our daily *Confeſſions* (as " (*a*) one expreſſes it) do ſignify any thing; " if our *Vows* and *Proteſtations* have any " Truth in them; if our *Prayers* are ſe- " rious, our *Praiſes* hearty, and our *Com-* " *munions* ſincere; by theſe, all theſe do " we *tie* the Bond of our *Relation*, and " our Duty towards him, as *our Lord*, " more cloſely upon our Conſciences."

THUS, in whatever *Notion* we take the Word *Lord*, in whatever *Capacity* we conſider our Saviour, and whatever Title we make the *Foundation* of Dominion, Chriſt cannot but have an undoubted Right to our Submiſſion and Obedience: And yet the *Creed*, in calling him *our Lord*, in a more peculiar Manner, ſeems to intimate ſome *Propriety* of *Dominion*, that he has over *Chriſtians*, as the immediate *Subjects* of his particular *Kingdom*.

Upon what Account Chriſt, in a particular Senſe, is called our Lord.

To elucidate this, we muſt obſerve, (*b*) that there are ſome Hints and imperfect Diſcoveries in Scripture of two great *Powers* in the Univerſe, warring againſt each other under their reſpective *Heads* and Leaders; that the *Head* of one Party is *Jeſus Chriſt*, and the Head of the other, the *Devil*, or Satan; that, as they have two *ſeparate* Kingdoms, they are perpetually contending, and conflicting together, which may be the Senſe of (*c*) *Michael and his Angels fighting againſt the Dragon, and the Dragon and his Angels fighting, but not prevailing*; and, laſtly, that the Kingdom of *Chriſt* is repreſented to us under the Notion of a *Kingdom of Light*, as that of the *Devil*, under the Notion of a *Kingdom of Darkneſs*: For, (*d*) *there are but two Ways*, (ſays an *ancient* Father) *the one of Light, over which preſide the Angels of God, who is the eternal Lord; and the other of Darkneſs, which is ſubject to the Angels of* Satan, *who is the Ruler of Wickedneſs*.

WHAT Number of Subjects the Devil might draw into his Party, we cannot tell; but, from the general Wickedneſs and Depravation of human Nature, we have, even now, but too melancholy a Proſpect of the *Extent* of his Empire. Before the Coming of Chriſt, however, his Dominion was much larger. The Generality of Mankind were ſo blinded by his *Infatuations*, that they ſeem'd to have loſt all right and true Notions of God. They were ſunk into Idolatry; they worſhipped and ſacrificed to the Devil; and, being (*e*) *dead in Treſpaſſes and Sins, they walked according to the Courſe of the World, according to the Prince of the Power of the Air, and the Spirit, that worketh in the Children of Diſobedience*. But now, when our bleſſed Saviour came into the World, he erected a Kingdom in Oppoſition to that Power, which the Devil had uſurp'd.— Into this Kingdom he invited all, *both* Jew *and* Greek, *both bond and free*; for the Publication of his Goſpel was, (*f*) *to open Men's Eyes, and to turn them from Darkneſs unto Light, and from the Power of* Satan *unto God*: And into this Kingdom every one, who was minded to become his Subject, was admitted by *Baptiſm*, * where he made an open *Renunciation* of the Devil's Kingdom and *Intereſt*, and publickly

 ſubmitted

(*a*) *Barrow* on the Creed. (*b*) The Crit. Hiſt. of the Apoſtles Creed. (*c*) Rev. xii. 7, 8. (*d*) *Barnabas* in his Epiſ. Cath. Ch. 28. (*e*) Eph. ii. 2. (*f*) Acts xxvi. 16.

† In the *primitive* Church, three Things were indiſpenſably required of thoſe, who came to *Baptiſm*. 1ſt, A formal *Renunciation* of the Devil; 2dly, A *Promiſe*, or Engagement to live in Obedience to Chriſt; and 3dly, A *Profeſſion* of Faith, made in the Words of ſome received *Creed*. The *Form of Renunciation* (according to the Author of the *Conſtitutions*) runs in theſe Words, —— " I renounce *Satan*, and his Works, and his " Pomps, and his Service, and his Angels, and his Inventions, and all Things, that belong to him, or that are " ſubject to him." This *Renunciation*, the Perſons, to be baptized, uſed to pronounce, in a *ſtanding Poſture*, and with their Faces turned towards the *Weſt*; becauſe the *Weſt* (as *Cyril of Jeruſalem* explains the Cuſtom) is the Place of *Darkneſs*, and *Satan* is Darkneſs, and his *Strength* is Darkneſs. The *Promiſe*, or Engagement of *Obedience to Chriſt* (which immediately followed the *Renunciation* of the Devil) was pronounced in theſe Words, " I give myſelf up to thee, O Chriſt, to be govern'd by thy Laws:" And, in making this Profeſſion, the Perſon, to be baptized, turn'd to the *Eaſt*; becauſe, as they had juſt before renounced the Devil, the *Paradiſe* of God, which was planted in the *Eaſt*, was now laid open to them, and becauſe the *Eaſt*, or *Riſing Sun* was an *Emblem* of *Chriſt*, to whom they now turned from *Satan*, that is, from Darkneſs to Light, and from ſerving Idols, to ſerve him, who is the *Sun of Righteouſneſs*, and Fountain of Light. *Bingham*'s Antiq of the Chriſtian Church, Vol. I.

ſubmitted himſelf to *Jeſus*, as his only *Lord* and *Sovereign*. This was the Practice in the *primitive* Church: When, to be a *Chriſtian* was thought more *honourable*, than the higheſt *Dignity*, or Preferment in Life; and to be a *Servant* of *Jeſus Chriſt*, a more glorious Appellation, than all the *empty* Titles, which the greateſt *Monarchs* aſſume to themſelves: When, from a Senſe of this Honour done them, they thought themſelves concern'd *to walk worthy* of the *Relation* they bore to the Son of God, and to give continual *(a) Thanks unto the Father, who had made them meet to be Partakers of the Saints in Light; who had delivered them from the Power of Darkneſs, and tranſlated them into the Kingdom of his dear Son, in whom they had Redemption through his Blood, even the Forgiveneſs of Sins.*

The OBJECTION.

" BUT, if this *Son of God* was de-
" ſign'd by his Father to be the
" *Lord* and *Governor* of the *Univerſe*, at
" leaſt of all, that ſhould be willing to
" come under his *Dominion*, we can hard-
" ly conceive the Reaſon, why he was
" ſent into ſo *ſmall a Corner* of the World,
" as *Judæa* was, and among a *People*, ſo
" *obſcure* and deſpicable, as to make no
" tolerable Figure in it. Had God indeed
" intended to promote him to ſuch great
" Honour, the likelieſt Way would have
" been, to have thrown him into ſome
" *Patrician* Family at *Rome*, which was
" then the *Center* of *Power*, or to have
" had him educated under ſome famous
" Philoſopher, or *Orator* at *Athens*, which
" was the ancient *Seat* of Learning, that,
" either by his Birth or Parts, he might
" have recommended himſelf to the *Op-*
" *portunities* of Promotion: But to ſend
" him into the World in the *Form of a*
" *Servant*; to have him born of a poor Fa-
" mily, and in a Place, *(b) whence no good*
" *Thing could come*; meanly taught and
" educated, ſupported by *Contributions*,
" and kept all along in a Condition not
" many Removes from *ſtarving*; and yet,
" at the ſame Time, to expect that, under
" the *Preſſure* of theſe Circumſtances, he
" ſhould *lift up his Head*, and, having ſub-
" dued *all* before him, climb by Degrees
" to an *univerſal Monarchy*, is a Thing
" unreaſonable, and, incongrous, if not im-
" poſſible. If *Judæa* however, above all
" other Nations, was to have the *Pre-emi-*
" *nence* in this Reſpect, we are ſtill at a
" Loſs, why he did not anſwer his *Cha-*
" *racter*, and come in the *State* and *Gran-*
" *deur*, wherein he was all along promiſed,
" and expected. For, when we hear God,
" by the Mouth of his Prophet, thus be-
" ſpeaking, and encouraging his Son, (*c*)
" *Aſk of me, and I will give thee the*
" *Heathen for thine Inheritance, and the*
" *uttermoſt Parts of the Earth for thy Poſ-*
" *ſeſſion*; (*d*) *all Kings ſhall fall down before*
" *thee, all Nations ſhall do thee Service*;
" and therefore (*e*) *gird on thy Sword upon*
" *thy Thigh, O thou moſt mighty*; *according*
" *to thy Worſhip and Renown, ride on in*
" *thy Glory and Majeſty, and thy Right*
" *Hand ſhall teach thee terrible Things:*
" When we hear all this, I ſay, we
" cannot but think, that the proper *Meſ-*
" *ſiah* was to be a *temporal* Prince, a great
" *Warrior*, and mighty *Conqueror*, who,
" by the irreſiſtible Force of his Arms,
" ſhould reduce all other Powers upon
" Earth; *reſtore the Kingdom to* Iſrael; and,
" in his own *Perſon*, ſet up a vaſt *extenſive*
" Empire; and therefore we need leſs won-
" der, that the *Jews*, when they ſaw the dif-
" ferent Appearance, that our Saviour made,
" ſhould be ſo highly diſpleaſed, and of-
" fended at him. His *Kingdom* indeed *was*
" *not of this World*, and therefore *outward* State
" and Magnificence he might not affect; but
" a *competent* fix'd Maintenance, between
" *Poverty and Riches*, and conſiſting in
" *Food convenient* for him, was certainly
" the *leaſt*, that might be expected: But
" when, inſtead of this, we find him ſo
" *extremely poor*, as, at his *firſt Coming*
" into the World, to be born in a *Stable*,
" and laid in a *Manger*; in his *Childhood* and
" *Exile*, to have no other Attendants, than
" a *weak* Mother, and a *ſuppoſed* Father;
" in his *Youth* and *Manhood*, to follow a
" mean *Occupation*, and, in the *whole*
" *Courſe* of his Life, to be ſo deſtitute and
" diſtreſſed, as, in the *Heavineſs of his Soul*,
" to utter this Complaint, *(f) The Foxes*
" *have Holes, and the Birds of the Air have*
Neſts,

(*a*) Col. i. 12, &c. (*b*) 1 John i. 46. (*c*) Pſal. ii. 8. (*d*) Pſal. lxxii. 11. (*e*) Pſal. xlv 3, 4. (*f*) Luke ix. 5, 8.

" *Neſts, but the Son of Man hath not where* " *to lay his Head*; we may well be allow'd " to aſk, Is this the *King of* Iſrael? this " the Ruler of the Univerſe? that was " to ſet up his Throne *on high*, make all " *his Enemies his Foot-ſtool*, (*a*) and *whom* " *all Dominions ſhould ſerve and obey?* be- " cauſe, in our Conception, *Lord* and " *Vaſſal*, *Prince* and *Peaſant*, *King* and " *Beggar*, are Terms *incompatible*, and " ſtand in too diſtant an Oppoſition, ever " to meet in one and the ſame *Perſon*."

Anſwered, by ſhewing why God made choice of Judæa *for the Place of his Son's Nativity.*

ST. *Paul*, in his *firſt* Epiſtle to the *Corinthians*, has, in ſome meaſure, furniſhed us with an Anſwer to the *former* Part of this Objection, when he tells us, that (*b*) *God hath choſen the fooliſh Things of the World to confound the wiſe, the weak Things of it to confound, thoſe that are mighty, and the baſe Things of the World, thoſe, that are deſpiſed, yea and thoſe, that are not, has God choſen, to bring to nought Things that are:* And from this Poſition we may infer, that, though *Judæa* was a ſmall Province, and its *Inhabitants* a very contemptible People, yet God, who *does not ſee, as Man ſees*, might, for that very Reaſon perhaps, be induced to make choice of it for the Place of his Son's Nativity. He, in the Government of the World (as (*c*) one expreſſes it) does not tie himſelf down to our fooliſh *Proverbs*. The *Character* of a Nation for Power and Renown is no *Recommendation* to him; and whatever the general Temper and Diſpoſition of the People may be, there is hardly any Country, but what has produced * ſome brave Spirits, and excellent Perſons. However this be, it is certain, that (*d*) in *Judæa*, were repoſited the ancient *Oracles* of God, and the Writings of the Prophets, which had teſtified before of Chriſt's Coming; and therefore here were the *Evidences* kept, whereby it could more eaſily be proved that he was the Perſon deſign'd, and ſent by God: And, as no Nation under Heaven was ſo nice in ſettling their *Genealogies*, as the *Jews*, becauſe every Family was ambitious of having the *Meſſiah* ſpring from them; ſo *here* was the moſt *authentick* Copies, whereby to know, when he was to come, whether (as had been predicted of him) he was, in Reality, *of the Seed of* Abraham, *of the Tribe of* Judah, *and of the Houſe of* David. How *deſpicable* ſoever therefore the *Jewiſh* Nation might be in Compariſon of others, yet they had this mighty Advantage above others, that *God was their God.* Among them was preſerved the Knowledge, and Worſhip of the one ſupreme *Deity*, whilſt all other Countries were over-run with *Idolatry* and *Polytheiſm*. To them (as the Apoſtle obſerves) (*e*) *pertained the Adoption, and the Glory, and the Covenants, and the Giving of the Law, and the Service of God, and the Promiſes*; and therefore, as God had all along thus highly diſtinguiſhed them above every Nation, it might more reaſonably be expected that of them, *as concerning the Fleſh, Chriſt ſhould come, who is over all, God, bleſſed for-ever*, Amen.

Why Chriſt was not highly *deſcended, and* liberally *educated.*

DIGNITY of Birth, and, eſpecially, *Liberality* of Education, are great Accompliſhments among Men; but then we look upon them as *ſuch*, and are leſs *ſurprized* to meet with Things *extraordinary* in Perſons, that are *ornamented* with them: So that, (*f*) had our bleſſed Saviour been born of a *noble* Family, bred up at the *Feet* of the *Jewiſh Rabbies*, inſtructed by the *Athenian Philoſophers*, or train'd up to Eloquence by the *Roman Orators*; had his Education, I ſay, been *poliſh'd* and expenſive, and anſwerable to his high Pedigree, the Actions of his Life would not have been ſo *remarkable*. If his Time had been altogether ſpent in *Letters*, he would not have raiſed the Wonder of the People to ſuch a Degree, as to aſk, (*g*) *whence has this Man his Wiſdom, and theſe mighty Works?* The *Strength* and Uncommonneſs of Thought, the *Clearneſs* and Majeſty, which appears in his Diſcourſes, (particularly in his *Sermon on the Mount*) would have been leſs *admirable*, if they had come from the *Schools of the Prophets*. His dextrous *Diſengaging* himſelf from thoſe *captious* Queſtions of the

(*a*) Dan. ii. 27. (*b*) 1 Cor. i. 27, 28. (*c*) *Tillotſon*'s Ser. Vol. II.

* Thus, among the *Grecians*, the *Bœotians*, were eſteemed a *dull* People even to a *Proverb*; and yet *Pindar* one of their chief Poets, was born among them. The *Scythians* were a *barbarous* Nation, and *no good Thing*, one would think, could have ever *come from thence*; and yet that Country produced *Anacharſis*, an eminent Philoſopher. The *Idumeans* were *Aliens* and *Strangers to the Covenant*, and yet *Job*, one of the beſt of Men, lived among them, and *Abraham*, the Father of the Faithful, came from *Ur* of the *Chaldees*, a moſt wicked and idolatrous People. *Tillotſon*'s Ser. Vol. II.

(*d*) *Leng*'s Ser. at *Boyle*'s Lect. (*e*) Rom. ix. 4, 5. (*f*) *Collier*'s Ser. (*g*) Matt. xiii. 54.

the *Heroidans*, his ſudden *reſolving* the profoundeſt *Doubts*, and *ſilencing* the *Scribes* and *Phariſees*, would, in ſuch a Caſe, have been looked upon as *human Acquiſitions*. Nay, his *working* Miracles, and *healing* Diſeaſes, might poſſibly have been imputed to the Help of a learned *Correſpondence*, to his Skill in *natural* Cauſes, to his underſtanding the *Laws of the Elements*, the *Conſtitution* of human Bodies, the *Progreſs* and *Waining of* Diſeaſes, *&c.* had he been converſant in theſe Sort of Speculations. But now the *Meanneſs* of our Saviour's Condition and Education takes away all *Colour*, as well as all *Force*, from ſuch Objections, and muſt needs awaken the Curioſity of every *Stander-by*, to enquire, from what *unknown* Original, from what *myſterious* Aſſiſtance, theſe mighty Effects do proceed; and, when he can diſcover no *Reſemblance* of Nature, no *Marks* of human Extraction, he will then be led to aſcribe them to the great *Author of all*, who can work as eaſily without *ſecond Cauſes*, as with them.

Prophecies *concerning his Kingdom* miſapplied, *and why.*

OUR bleſſed Saviour indeed ſufficiently *manifeſted forth* his Father's *Glory* in the wonderful Works which he did; but the Notion of a *mighty Prince* and Conqueror ran ſo ſtrong in the Minds of the *Jews*, that they could hardly attend to any thing elſe, and yet this was all a Fancy of their own inventing; for, if we look the *Prophecies* all over, and take them in a *connected* Senſe, we ſhall find no *Traces* of any ſuch Thing. Some Paſſages indeed we meet with, that ſeem to have an Aſpect this Way; but then, upon Enquiry, we ſhall find that this is not the main *Scope* and Intendment of them; that what relates to ſome other Prince, (to *David*, for Inſtance, who was a great Conqueror) the *Jews* perverſely apply to Chriſt; what concerns the Glory and Majeſty of his *ſecond* Coming, they forcibly *wreſt* to his *firſt*; or what denotes their own *Redemption* in the *laſt Days*, under the mighty *Protection* of that *Chriſt*, whom they *now* reject, they falſely interpret of the *Victory* and Triumph, which, upon the Defeat of their Enemies, he ſhould obtain; the *Dominion*, which he ſhould exerciſe over the *Heathens*, and the rich *Affluence* of Bleſſings, which is to be ſhowered down upon God's People. The Truth is, *(a)* the *Jewiſh* Miſtakes about this Matter are chiefly owing to their *imperfect* View of the whole Senſe of the Prophets; to their *Inattention* to ſome plain Paſſages, and too ſtrong an Attention to others; their great *Partiality* to their own Nation, in reſtraining the Bleſſings, derived from the *Meſſiah*, to themſelves; and their *arbitrary* Determination of Things in the *prophetick Scheme* to wrong Times, and Seaſons.

Thoſe relating to his mean *Condition, and the* Temper *of his Kingdom.*

THEY are big with the Thoughts of an *univerſal* King, living in State and Magnificence, and having the whole *Globe* under his Dominion; but they never once conſider, that the Prophecies, relating to the *Meſſias*, deſcribe him as *(b) a Root growing out of a dry Ground; as one that had no Form, or Comelineſs, nor any Beauty, that we ſhould deſire him; as a Man of Sorrows, and acquainted with Grief, deſpiſed, and of no Eſteem, oppreſs'd, and afflicted, taken from Priſon, and from Judgment, and cut off from the Land of the Living*; * undeniable Evidences of the obſcure, and deſpicable, and ſuffering State, that this great King was to appear in!

THEY talk of nothing but *Wars* and Conqueſts, *Triumphs* and Trophies; but they quite forget, that the Deſign of this King's Coming, was, *(c)* not to encourage a *martial* Spirit, to make it a glorious Thing to kill and deſtroy, and to ſet the World on fire, about Empire and Dominion. No; he took the *Government* upon *his Shoulders*, *(d) that Righteouſneſs and Peace might flouriſh; that Men might beat their Swords into Plow-ſhares, and their Spears into Pruning-Hooks; that Nation might not lift up Sword againſt Nation, neither learn War any more.* For, *whence come Wars and Fightings*, the *Burnings* of Cities, and *Deſolation* of Countries? What is the Reaſon (as *Tully* obſerves) that Mankind are the moſt *fatal Enemies*

(a) Chapman's Euſebius. *(b)* Iſa liii. 2, *&c.*

* From theſe, and many more Paſſages, that might be produced, it is ſo very manifeſt, that the Prophets pointed out a *ſuffering Meſſiah:* And therefore the *Jews* had no other Way of *evading* the Force of their Words, and *ſupporting* their high Expectations of their great Prince, than by recurring to the Fiction of a *double Meſſiah*, one victorious and triumphant, by the Name of the *Son of* David, and another in a mean afflicted Condition, called *the Son of* Joſeph. A mere Invention of theirs, without any Foundation in Scripture, unknown to the *Jews* before our Saviour's Time, and, from very late and ſlender Authorities (as Dr. *Pocock* has evidently ſhewn) derived to the *modern Rabbies. Chapman's* Euſebius.

(c) Collier's Ser. *(d)* Iſa. ii. 4.

Enemies to each other; that all the Famines and Earthquakes, all the Plagues and Inundations, all the *Incidents* of Nature and *Scourges* of Heaven, have not ſwept away ſo many Lives, as the Sword? Why, 'tis Ambition, that has occaſioned all this Ruin and Barbarity; 'tis *Empire*, and that they call *Glory*; 'tis to get the *Power* to enſlave and deſtroy, to be more mighty to do Miſchief, that puſhes the *Nimrods* of the Earth to theſe Acts of Violence.

BUT now, the Intent of Chriſt's Coming was to reſtrain this ambitious and deſtructive Spirit; to mortify the *Luſts of the Eye*, and *the Pride of Life*; and, from his own *Example*, as well as *Doctrine*, to teach the deluded World the Beauty and Beatitude of Meekneſs and Humility, of Peace and Righteouſneſs, (*a*) *of ſitting every Man under his Vine, and under his Fig-tree*, without Fear or Moleſtation. (*b*) *Rejoice greatly* therefore, *O Daughter of* Zion; *ſhout, O Daughter of* Jeruſalem, *behold thy King cometh unto thee, and bringeth Salvation, lowly, and riding upon an Aſs, and upon a Colt, the Foal of an Aſs. He will not cry, nor lift up his Voice, nor cauſe it to be heard in the Streets*; but (*c*) *he will cut off the Chariot from* Ephraim, *and the Horſe from* Jeruſalem, *and the Battle-bow will he cut off, and ſpeak Peace unto the Heathen!* This is the Genius of the *Meſſias*; this the *Spirit*, that is to transfuſe itſelf thro' his whole Kingdom: And therefore how vain and *chimerical* are the Notions of thoſe, who form ſuch Conceptions of his *Royal* State, of the *Pomp* and Retinue of his Court, the *Victories* he is to atchieve, and the vaſt *Extent* of Empire, he is to acquire for his People!

Chriſt's mean Appearance intended to diſcountenance Pride *and* Ambition.

THERE is no greater Argument of the *Weakneſs* and Degeneracy of Mankind, than their ſtrong Inclinations, upon all Occaſions, to make a *Figure*, and to graſp at Power; as if there was nothing great, but what makes a *Shew*, and glitters upon the *vulgar Eye*, and no real Satisfaction to be had, but in making others miſerable. But now, (*d*) never was Pride and Vanity ſo put out of Countenance, as by *God's taking upon him the Form of a Servant*; making his Entry in ſo poor a Figure, and, from a *Throne of Glory*, ſtooping down to *ſwaddling Cloaths, and a Manger*: Never was the Fruit of *Ambition* ſo *blaſted*, the Extent of Empire, and the Splendour of Victories ſo degraded and diſparaged, as in that ſhort Doxology of the Angels, (*e*) *Glory to God in the higheſt, and on Earth Peace, Good-will towards Men*: Never was the *State* and Magnificence of *Courts*, their numerous *Train* and noble *Retinue* ſo villified, as by the *King of Kings* chuſing to receive the firſt Reſpects, and to have his firſt *Preſence* compos'd, of a few humble *Shepherds*; and never was the right Uſe of Power and Riches more truly taught, nor the *cold* Neglects, and *haughty* Arrogance, which they are apt to beget, ſet in a fairer Light, than by the great Creator of the Univerſe condeſcending (*f*) *to waſh his Diſciples Feet*; and, (*g*) *though he was rich, yet, for our Sakes, becoming poor, that we, through his Poverty, might be rich.*

And the Vanity of Riches.

WE acknowledge indeed, that there is no Sin in being *rich* and *powerful*. We may make uſe of the *Conveniences* of Life, when they are fairly laid in our Way; (*h*) nay, in this Degeneracy of Mankind, large Fortunes and Grandeur are, in ſome Sort, nececeſſary to Perſons in *publick Stations*, to put the *Vulgar* in mind, where they ought to pay their *Obedience*, and to keep up the Reputation of Government: But then, it is the *Weakneſs* of Men's Underſtandings, which occaſions this *Neceſſity*. Our Saviour has well obſerved, that (*i*) *a Man's Life does not conſiſt in the Abundance of the Things, that he poſſeſſes*: They ſet him indeed upon *higher* Ground than others, but they make no true *Addition* to the *Stature* of his Being; and therefore, as he, that has the greateſt Plenty of them, is not to be *idoliz'd*, ſo he, that is under the utmoſt Deſtitution, ought not to be *deſpiſed*. Upon this Account it is no *Dimunition* of our Lord's Character, nor any valid *Objection* againſt his being the *Chriſt*, the Saviour of the World, that his Condition of Life was poor, and low, full of Affliction, and conſtant Tribulation; for (*k*) the *Jews* themſelves, (if they would conſult the Scriptures) might know, that many of their own *Prophets*, and holy Men, whom they acknowledge to have been *Meſſengers ſent from God*, were Perſons, that had to ſtruggle

(*a*) Iſa. iv. 4. (*b*) Zech. ix. 9. (*c*) Zech. ix. 10. (*d*) *Stanhope*'s Epiſt. and Goſp. Vol. I
(*e*) Luke ii. 14. (*f*) John xiii. 3. (*g*) 2 Cor. viii. 9. (*h*) *Collier*'s Ser. (*i*) Luke xii. 15.
(*k*) *Leng*'s Ser. at *Boyle*'s Lect.

with Poverty and Want, with Sufferings and Perſecution; (*a*) *had Trial of cruel Mockings, and Scourges, yea, moreover, of Bonds and Impriſonment, being deſtitute, afflicted, tormented, of whom the World was not worthy.* Nay, the very *Gentiles* themſelves, (if they would look into their own *Philoſophers*) might learn, that outward Pomp and Greatneſs, the Power and Riches of the World, are rather to be *deſpiſed*, than *admired* by a truly great and wiſe Man: (*b*) That no *good Man* is the leſs beloved of God, for being placed in a State of *Poverty* and *Contempt*, as was the wiſe *Epictetus*, or for being *hated*, and put to death *unjuſtly*, as was the renowned *Socrates:* That the moſt eminent Examples of Virtue, and ſuch as were fitteſt to teach and reform the World, had been Men tried in the *Furnace* of Affliction; and that Miſery and Sufferings are ſo far from being *inconſiſtent* with real Goodneſs, that (according to *Plato*'s Reaſoning) *to make the Character of a truly righteous Man unqueſtionably perfect, he muſt be ſtripped of all Things in the World, even of the Credit and Reputation of being righteous.* Now, if this be the higheſt *Degree* of real Virtue, the utmoſt *Pitch* of human Perfection, then certainly the mean and ſuffering Condition of our Saviour ought not, in Reaſon, to give any Offence to thoſe, who conſider him as a Perſon coming to exhibit the moſt perfect *Example* of the moſt *difficult* Virtues, and to reveal to the World the Reality of a future *inviſible* State, (*c*) *with the Glory of which all the Sufferings of this preſent Time are not worthy to be compar'd.*

But, this notwithſtanding, he always laid claim to a Kingdom.

But however the *Intent* of Chriſt's mean Appearance might be to *diſcountenance* the Pride and Ambition of Life, and to recommend to our Practice the moſt difficult Duties of Religion, we find him no where renouncing his Pretenſions to a *Kingdom*, nor retracting his *Title* to the Honour of being the *Meſſias*. So far from this, that, upon his publick Entry into *Jeruſalem*, when the People cry'd, (*d*) *Hoſannah to the Son of* David, *bleſſed be the King that cometh in the Name of the Lord*, inſtead of (*e*) *rebuking the Multitude*, or diſowning that Title, *I tell ye*, (ſays he to the *Phariſees*, who were not a little offended at it) *if theſe ſhould hold their Peace, the Stones would immediately cry out:* So far from this, that, even at the Time of his *Arraignment*, he claims to himſelf a Kingdom, and, when *Pilate*, with ſome Sharpneſs and Surprize, aſks him, *art thou then a King?* he replies poſitively, *Thou ſayeſt that I am a King*, that is (by a known *Hebraiſm*) *thou ſayeſt right, I am a King*; and ſo far from this, that, when the High-Prieſt (*f*) *adjured him by the living God to tell him, whether he was Chriſt the Son of the Bleſſed*, his Anſwer is directly, *I am*; and *ye ſhall ſee the Son of Man ſitting on the Right-Hand of Power, and coming in the Cloud: of Heaven.*

This makes Chriſt a mix'd *Character, but how that may be ſolved.*

There is indeed (and we own it) a great *Diſſimilitude* or *Contraſt* in the Character of the *Meſſias*, as it is repreſented in Scripture, a Mixture of Light and Shade, Weakneſs and Power, Glory and Diſgrace, Affliction and Triumph; but all this is unriddled by the Suppoſition of a *ſecond Advent*, and that his *regal* Dominion and Dignity was to follow a preceding State of *Humiliation*; that, ſubſequent to his Sorrows and Death, he was (*g*) *to ſee his Seed*, i. e. his Diſciples and Servants innumerable, and *prolong his Days, that the Pleaſure of the Lord might proſper in his Hands*; and that (*h*) *to him, whom Man had deſpiſed, and to him, whom before the Nation had abhorred, Kings ſhould ariſe, and Princes ſhould worſhip, becauſe of the Lord, who is faithful.*

In the mean Time, the *Abjectneſs* of his Condition can be no Excuſe to the *Jews*, for their ſlighting and condemning the *Lord of Life*, ſince, in Reality, (*i*) his *true Power* and Authority was as much *ſuperior* to the *Grandeur*, they expected in him, as his *ſeeming Meanneſs*, for which they contemn'd him, was *inferior* to it. They expected a *temporal* Deliverer, and he propoſed to them a Salvation *eternal*; they look'd for a Prince of *Men*, and he appeared to be the Lord of *Angels*; they expected a *Meſſiah*, poſſeſſed of great Power on Earth, and he ſhewed himſelf to be inveſted with *all Power both in Earth and Heaven.* Thus did (*k*) *the Wiſdom of God put to Silence the Ignorance of fooliſh Men*; and, while the Lovers of worldly Grandeur rejected, and reviled our Saviour for his ſeeming *Meanneſs*, under that Meanneſs there lay *concealed*, and to all well-diſpoſed Perſons, (*l*) (*who look'd for Redemption in* Iſrael) there

(*a*) Heb. xi. 36, *&c.* (*b*) *Leng*'s Ser. at *Boyle*'s Lect. (*c*) Rom. viii. 18. (*d*) Matt. xxi. 9. (*e*) Luke xix. 39, 40. (*f*) Mark xiv. 61, 62. (*g*) Iſa. liii. 10. (*h*) Iſa. xlix. 7. (*i*) *Clarke*'s Ser. Vol. VI. (*k*) 1 Pet. ii. 15. (*l*) Luke ii. 38.

there *diſcover'd* itſelf a Power, infinitely ſuperior to the moſt *ſanguine* Hopes, and largeſt Expectations of thoſe, whoſe Hearts were bent upon nothing ſo much, as worldly Greatneſs. (*a*) *O the Depth of the Riches, both of the Knowledge, and Wiſdom of God, how unſearchable are his Judgments, and his Ways paſt finding out!*

DISSERTATION VIII.

The Wiſdom and Goodneſs of God, in governing Mankind by his only Son in our Nature.

The Occaſion *of this* Appointment.

(*b*) GOD *at firſt* (as the Book of *Wiſdom* expreſſes it) *created Man to be immortal, and made him to be the Image of his own Eternity. He breathed into him the Breath of Life*, gave him an *Underſtanding* large and capacious, a *Will* inclinable to the ſupreme Good, *Affections* ſubmitted to the Dictates of Reaſon, and a *Nature* under no Propenſity to tranſgreſs. (*c*) *He crowned him with Glory and Honour*, and though *he made him a little lower than the Angels*, yet *he gave him Dominion over the Work of his Hands, and put all Things under his Feet*. In this Capacity, and while he maintained his *Rank* among the Order of other intelligent Beings, he was in a Condition fit to converſe with *God*, and to live under his *immediate* Dominion. How long our firſt Parents continued in this bleſſed State, we cannot tell; but this we may know aſſuredly, that their *Felicity* was vaſtly great, while they enjoyed the Comforts of their own Innocence, and were every Day viſited with *the Light of God's Countenance*. But when, by their own *Folly*, as well as the Devil's *Envy*, *Sin entered into the World, and Death by Sin*, a ſtrange *Cataſtrophe* of Things then enſued. Their Underſtandings grew *dark*, their Reaſon *weak*, their Affections *wild*, their Paſſions *impetuous*, and, under this general Depravation of their Nature, God, (*d*) *who is of purer Eyes than to behold Evil, and cannot look on Iniquity*, caſt them away as *deformed* and loathſome *Objects*, and would not endure them in his Sight; ſo that the Senſe of Shame, the Agonies of Guilt, the Dread of divine Wrath, and the terrible Apprehenſions of a Puniſhment, which they knew not how to avert, were enough to drive them into Deſperation. In this Condition however they were not long to abide: The divine Wiſdom, which foreſaw their *Fall*, had provided Means for their *Reſtoration*; and, as their decayed Nature ſtood now in need of more Aſſiſtance, than what, in a State of *Integrity*, it wanted, a proper Perſon was appointed, to take them under his more immediate Care and Government, and to receive them into a *Covenant of Mercy*, which required not an *unſinning*, but only a *ſincere* Obedience, and *that* made eaſy and practicable by the *Succours* of Heaven, and the *Grace* of a powerful *Mediator*.

Why the Son of God *was made choice of.*

SINCE therefore God, for juſt and wiſe Reaſons, was reſolved no more to converſe *immediately* with ſinful Men, who, by their ſad *Apoſtacy*, had rendered themſelves unworthy of that high *Dignation*; and (*e*) ſince his tender Pity and Compaſſion would not permit him utterly to reject and abandon them; there was no other Expedient (at leaſt that we know of) wherein the *Holineſs* of his Majeſty could ſo *fairly* accord with the *Tenderneſs* of his Mercy, as this of his appointing his Son to be his *Vicegerent* among Mankind, as we find he was both under the *Patriarchal* and *Moſaick* Diſpenſations.

Who, from the very firſt was his Father's Vicegerent.

THAT there was a certain extraordinary Perſon, ſometimes called *Jehovah*, and ſometimes the *Angel Jehovah*, who frequently appeared, and ſpake to the *Jewiſh Patriarchs*, who uſually aſſumed to himſelf divine *Appellations*, and to whom theſe holy Men were wont to pay divine *Honours*, is plain from Inſtances almoſt innumerable, that occur in the Hiſtory of their Lives. That this Perſon was not a common *Angel*, or Meſſenger ſent from God, is evident, not only from his taking to himſelf (*f*) the incommunicable Name and Attributes of God, but from his admitting *Jacob* (*g*) to *offer a Sacrifice* and religious *Vow to him*; ſuffering *Joſhua to fall on his Face, and worſhip him*; and commanding him *to looſe his Shoe off his Foot, becauſe the Place, whereon he*

(*a*) Rom. xi. 33. (*b*) Wiſdom ii. 23. (*c*) Pſal. viii. 5, 6. (*d*) Heb. i. 13. (*e*) *Scot's* Mediator. (*f*) Vide Gen. xxviii. 13. and xxxv. 11. (*g*) Gen. xxxi. 13. (*h*) Joſ. v. 14, 15.

he ſtood, was holy, as being *conſecrated* by his divine Preſence. That this divine Perſon was not God the Father, is manifeſt from our Saviour's telling the *Jews*, that they (*a*) *had not heard the Father's Voice at any Time, nor ſeen his Shape*, which certainly implies, that he never appeared among them, as indeed it was not congruous that he ſhould; for, as he is the *firſt* and *ſupreme* Perſon in the *Trinity*, he could not be *ſent*, nor properly be *call'd* an *Angel* or *Meſſenger*, without the Implication of a certain *Inferiority* to him, whoſe Meſſenger he was, which is no way *compatible* with the Character of *the moſt high God*; and therefore we muſt conclude, that this divine Perſon was *God the Son*, even as he himſelf informs the *Jews*, (*b*) *your Father* Abraham *rejoiced to ſee my Day, and he ſaw it, and was glad*; where, by *ſeeing his Day*, he cannot well mean any thing elſe, but that *Abraham* had a *real* and *perſonal* Sight of him, for in this Senſe we ſee that the *Jews* underſtood him.

This proved from ſeveral Inſtances.

THE Truth is, it was a Tradition of the *Jewiſh*, as well as the *Chriſtian* Church, that the divine *Word*, or *Son of God*, did, all along, execute a *regal* Office and Authority, under the ſupreme *God the Father*; for which Reaſon we find (*c*) *Philo* aſſerting, that God, who is the *King* and *Paſtor* of the World, has appointed the *Word*, his *firſt-begotten Son*, to undertake the Care of his ſacred *Flock*, as his own *Viceroy* and *Subſtitute*. 'Twas (*d*) *he* (and not improbably in an *human* Shape) that came to pronounce *Sentence* upon our unhappy Parents, who, conſcious of their Guilt, had *hid themſelves from the Preſence of the Lord among the Trees of the Garden: He*, (*e*) who called *Cain* to an Account for the Murder of his Brother *Abel*, and pronounced the Curſes of Heaven upon him for that crying Sin: *He*, (*f*) who admoniſhed *Noah*, *having found Grace in his Sight, to build him an Ark*, for the Preſervation of his own and his Family's Lives, whilſt every Thing elſe was *deſtroyed in the Flood: He*, (*g*) who came down to ſee the City and Tower of *Babel*, and *confounding* the Language of the Builders, *ſcattered* them abroad upon the Face of the whole Earth: *He*, (*h*) who appeared to *Abraham*, in the *Plains of Mamre*, to communicate to him his Deſign of deſtroying *Sodom* and *Gomorrah* for their abominable Sins, and to whom the *Patriarch* gave the Title of *the Judge of all the Earth: He*, (*i*) who prevented the Sacrifice of his Son *Iſaac*, and, for his Obedience in this Reſpect, gave him a Promiſe, that *in him ſhould all Families of the Earth be bleſſed: He*, (*k*) who renewed the ſame Promiſe to *Iſaac*, going to *Egypt* to avoid a Famine, and (*l*) to *Jacob*, going to *Padanaram*, to eſcape his Brother's Anger: *He*, (*m*) who appeared unto *Moſes in a Flame of Fire out of the midſt of a Buſh*, and *ſent him unto* Pharaoh, *that he might bring forth the Children of* Iſrael *out of* Egypt: *He*, (*n*) who conducted his *choſen People* through the *Red Sea*, and Wilderneſs, in a *Pillar of Cloud by Day*, and in a *Pillar of Fire by Night: He*, (*o*) who, to promulge his Law, deſcended upon Mount *Sinai* in a *bright* and *glorious Flame*, overcaſt with *thick ſolemn* Clouds, and in that Appearance (commonly called *the Glory of the Lord*) made his Entrance, firſt into the (*p*) *Tabernacle*, and afterwards into the (*q*) *Temple:* In ſhort, 'twas *he*, who, under the moſt high God, preſided all along over the *Jewiſh*, and, by the ſame Commiſſion, is now (*r*) *given to be Head over all Things to the Chriſtian Church, which is his Body, and the Fulneſs of him, that filleth all in all.*

For what Reaſon *God conferred on him this Office.*

FOR, ſince it did not comport, (as we ſaid before) with the *Majeſty* of the ſupreme God, when Man had corrupted his Ways, and ſold himſelf under the Dominion of Sin, to become his *Saviour* and Redeemer, we may ſuppoſe, that upon a *Conſultation* of the bleſſed *Trinity*, the eternal Son offered himſelf to undertake that *Province*, and, having contracted with his Father, that, at the Time then prefix'd, he ſhould come down upon Earth, and take human Nature upon him, to pay down an adequate *Ranſom, and by the Sacrifice of himſelf once* offer'd, to make a *full Satisfaction for the Sins of the whole World*; at the ſame Time he farther *ſtipulated*, that, in Conſideration of all the *Sufferings*, which would neceſſarily attend ſo great an *Enteprize*, his human Nature for

(*a*) John v 37. (*b*) John viii. 56, 57. (*c*) De Agricul. Lib. 2 (*d*) Gen. iii. 8. (*e*) Gen. iv. 9, &c. (*f*) Gen. vi. 8, &c. (*g*) Gen. xi. 7, &c. (*h*) Gen. xviii. 1, &c. (*i*) Gen. xxii. 12, &c. (*k*) Gen. xxvi. 1, 3. (*l*) Gen xxviii. 14. (*m*) Exod. iii. 2, 10. (*n*) Exod. xiii. 12. (*o*) Exod. xix. 16, 18. (*p*) Exod. xl. 34. (*q*) 2 Chron. vii. 1, &c. (*r*) Eph. i. 22, 23, &c.

(for his *Divinity* wanted no *Acceſſion* of Honour) ſhould *(a)* be *received into the heavenly Places, ſet at the Right Hand of God on high*, and inveſted with the Government of all Mankind in *general*, but *particularly of (b) the Church of God, which he was to purchaſe with his own Blood*; and that, this Dominion he ſhould hold and exerciſe, as long as the *Chriſtian* State ſhould laſt. When therefore our bleſſed Saviour, by aſſuming our Nature, had (*c*) *borne our Griefs, and carried our Sorrows*, had *(d) become obedient unto Death, even the Death of the Croſs*; and, by making his *Soul a Sacrifice for Sin*, had glorioufly perform'd each Article of *the everlaſting Covenant*; it was but *Juſtice* in God to advance him to the *Empire*, which he had promiſed in Reward of his meritorious Services, and to (*e*) *give him a Name, which is above every Name, that at the Name of* Jeſus *every Knee ſhould bow, of Things in Heaven, and Things in Earth, and Things under the Earth, and that every Tongue ſhould confeſs, that* Jeſus Chriſt *is Lord to the Glory of God the Father.*

The Benefits, that accrue to us from thence.

BUT, beſides the *Juſtice*, that God has done to the Merit of Chriſt, in appointing him to be *Heir* and *Lord* of all Things; his governing Mankind by his Son in our Nature is the higheſt Inſtance of his *Mercy* and Loving-kindneſs to us. That Chriſt has a *Royal Power*, delegated to him from the Father, to grant and beſtow all the Bleſſings of the *new Covenant* upon thoſe, that comply with the Terms and Conditions of it, cannot be diſputed: For, when we are told, that it is *(f) in, and through him*, that *the Father hath bleſſed us with all ſpiritual Bleſſings*; that, (*g*) in virtue of his *Prayer* and Interceſſion, the ſtanding *Comforter* of the Chriſtian Church, is procured and *ſent*; that he *(h)* has the Keys *of Hell and Death*, a Power to bind and looſe, to pardon and condemn; and that, by his Means, and *Mediation*, (*i*) *eternal Life is the Gift of God*; we cannot but conclude, that, tho' it is from *God the Father originally*, that all our Mercies are derived, yet it is through *God the Son immediately*, that they are diſpenſed to us, and that whatever God beſtows upon us, he beſtows it by the Hand of *Jeſus*, who, upon his firſt *Oblation* of his precious Sacrifice in Heaven, and *Interceſſion* thereupon, was conſtituted, and ſtill continues the *Royal Diſtributer* of all his Graces and Favours to Mankind. And if the Diſpenſation of all divine Gifts be thus committed to his Truſt, what may we not expect from the Intereſt of *one*, ſo *near* and *dear* to the *Almighty* (as is the Son of his *Eſſence* and his *Love*) that is either proper for him to *aſk*, or for his Father to *beſtow?* What may not we expect from *one*, who has a *Right* and Title to the *Favours* he diſpenſes, has waded through a *Sea* of Miſery to come at them, and made them the dear *Purchaſe* of his Blood? What may we not expect from *one*, who is not only our *King* by *Office*, but our *Brother* likewiſe by *Nature*, who is *(k) Fleſh of our Fleſh, and Bone of our Bone, and, (l) having been in all Points tempted as we are*, cannot fail of being tenderly *touch'd* with a *Fellow-feeling of our Infirmities.*

Such as of a kind Treatment here.

THE Prophet *Iſaiah*, deſcribing the good and merciful Reign of the great *Prince*, that was expected, *(m) Behold the Lord God ſhall come*, ſays he, *with a ſtrong Hand, and his Arm ſhall rule with him. Behold his Reward is with him, and his Work* (or the Recompence of his Work) *before him. He ſhall feed his Flock like a Shepherd, he ſhall gather the Lambs with his Arm, ſhall carry them in his Boſom, and gently lead thoſe, that are with Young.* Such is the *Deſcription*, which the Prophet gives us of the promiſed *Meſſiah*; and ſuch was our Saviour's *Deportment*, while he continued upon Earth. To the *(n) Meek*, and *Merciful*, and *Peace-makers*, to the *pure in Heart*, the *poor in Spirit*, thoſe that *mourn*, and thoſe that are reviled, and perſecuted, are his *Beatitudes* addreſs'd; and his general Invitations run in this Strain, *(o) Come unto me, all ye, that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you Reſt; take my Yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek, and lowly in Heart, and ye ſhall reſt unto your Souls, for my Yoke is eaſy, and my Burden is light.* And what a Comfort and Confolation to us all muſt this needs be, that our bleſſed Saviour, who is now *exalted to the Right Hand of God*, is ſtill *the ſame*; that his Advancement has made no *Alteration* in his Temper, but only *enlarged* his Power and Capacity of doing more good; that he is not like

(*a*) Eph. i. 21, 22. (*b*) Acts xx. 28. (*c*) Iſa. liii. 4. (*d*) Phil. ii. 8. (*e*) Ver. 9, &c. (*f*) Eph. i. 3. (*g*) John xvi. 7. (*h*) Rev. i. 18. (*i*) Rom. vi. 23. (*k*) Gen. ii. 23. (*l*) Heb. iv. 15. (*m*) Iſa. xl. 10, 11. (*n*) Matt. v. 3, &c. (*o*) Matt. xi. 28, &.

moſt of his *Vicegerents* here on Earth, when they *aſcend a Throne*, proud and arrogant, cruel and tyrannical, full of Malice, and full of high Diſdain, but *(a) gracious, and merciful, ſlow to Anger, of great Kindneſs; and that, when we deſerve Puniſhment*, and his Hand is lifted up to inflict the Blow, *his Relentings kindle within him*, and he *repenteth him of the Evil.*

(*b*) HAD God indeed govern'd us *immediately* by himſelf, we could not have thus depended upon his *Compaſſion*, nor been ſo ſecure of our *Intereſt* in him, becauſe the divine Nature (conſidered *purely* as ſuch) is infinitely diſtant from *ours*, and has no other Relation to it, but as it is the *common Cauſe* of all Things. Upon this Account, it is not eaſy to imagine, how God could be affected with the ſame *tender* and compaſſionate Regard to us, as he would be, where he *allied* to us in a *nearer* Degree; but now, that he governs us by his Son cloathed in our Nature, at his Hands we may, with full Confidence, expect a moſt gracious and merciful *Treatment*: That, ſo long as we are *ſincere* to him, he will *commiſerate* our Weakneſs, and, when we have gone aſtray, kindly receive us upon our humble Submiſſion; that he will not *load* us beyond our Strength, nor *puniſh* us beyond our Demerit; and that he will readily aſſiſt us in all our Needs, accept our honeſt Endeavours, and reward them beyond all our Hopes, and largeſt Expectations.

And a glorious Reward hereafter.

THE *Bleſſings* and *Rewards* indeed, which God promiſes, and the *Guilt* and *Demerit*, of which we ourſelves are conſcious, are Things ſo *diſtant* and *incompatible*, that, when we reflect on both, and compare them together, it ſo confounds our *Reaſon*, and aſtoniſhes our *Faith*, that, notwithſtanding all the *Security*, which God has given us, we can hardly believe without Trembling and Diffidence. But now, when we come to conſider, that theſe Bleſſings (great as they are) were *contracted* for in that *Covenant*, which our Saviour *ſeal'd*, and ratified with his Blood; that they are now actually depoſited in his Hands, to be given and diſtributed to thoſe, (*c*) *who by patient Continuance in well-doing ſeek for Glory, and Honour and Immortality*; above all, when we conſider *one* illuſtrious Inſtance of God's Liberality in rewarding Obedience, when found in our Nature; that the Man *Chriſt Jeſus*, for a few Years ſpent in his Service, for expoſing himſelf to ſome *temporal* Calamities, for *reſiſting unto Blood*, and ſo becoming a *ſpotleſs Victim* for the Sins of the World, is now advanced to the utmoſt Height of Bliſs and Glory; is *ſet above all Principality and Power*, all Might and Dominion; is ſerved and adored as the only *Potentate* under God the Father, through all the *heavenly* Regions; is worſhipped and celebrated by *Cherubim* and *Seraphim*, by *Arch-Angels* and *Angels*; is extoll'd in the Songs of the *Patriarchs* and *Prophets*, the *Apoſtles* and *Evangeliſts*, the *Confeſſors* and *Martyrs*; and his Name reſounded with everlaſting Praiſes and Thankſgivings, through all the vaſt *Choir of juſt Men, made perfect*; in a word, hath all *Power given him both in Heaven and Earth*, and to his *all-commanding* Will the whole Creation is *ſubjected:* When we conſider all this, I ſay, we cannot but, with the Apoſtle, cry out, *(d) We know whom we have believed*, and therefore, (*e*) *if we faint not, we ſhall certainly reap*; reap the glorious Fruits of our Labour, and ten thouſand-fold more, than the moſt *perfect* Obedience can deſerve, or the moſt *extenſive* Imagination can conceive. And therefore, (*f*) *being encompaſſed with a Cloud of Witneſſes*, and encouraged with *the Prize of our high Calling, let us run, with Patience, the Race, that is ſet before us, looking unto Jeſus, the Author and Finiſher of our Faith, who, for the Joy, that was ſet before him, endured the Croſs, deſpiſing the Shame, and is now ſet down at the Right Hand of the Throne of God.*

A ſummary Recapitulation of the Whole.

THIS may ſuffice for the *Expoſition* of the *ſecond* Article of our *Creed, I believe in Jeſus Chriſt, his only Son, our Lord, i. e.* "I "am fully perſuaded and convinced, from "the Teſtimony both of *ſacred* and *profane* "Hiſtory, that, ſeveral hundred Years ago, "there lived in *Judæa* a Perſon of eminent "Diſtinction, who, by the expreſs Com-"mand of God, was named *Jeſus*, or *Sa-"viour*, becauſe he was appointed by him "to deliver us from the Power and Pu-"niſhment of our Sins, and to put us "in the Method of attaining everlaſting "*Salvation*, which, by his *meritorious* "Sufferings, and Performances, he effec-"tually did: That this *Jeſus*, as to the "*Time*, *Place*, and *Manner* of his *Na-*

"*tivity*

(*a*) Joel ii. 13. (*b*) *Scot*'s Mediator. (*c*) Rom. ii. 7. (*d*) 2 Tim. i. 12. (*e*) Gal. vi. 9. (*f*) Heb. xii. 1, 2.

" *tivity*, his *perſonal* Qualities, his *Miracles*
" and *Sufferings*, and all other *prophetick*
" Characters, ſo nearly reſembled the *Meſſias*,
" that was to come, that there is no Queſ-
" tion to be made of his being the ſame
" Perſon, and, conſequently, *anointed* by
" God to the ſeveral Offices of *Prophet*,
" *Prieſt*, and *King*: That this *Jeſus Chriſt*,
" having aſſum'd the Character of *the Son of*
" *God* (under which the *Meſſias* was all along
" *predicted*) and being *recogniz'd*, as ſuch,
" by the ſacred Writers both of the *Old* and
" *New* Teſtament, who aſcribe to him
" ſuch *Titles* and *Attributes*, ſuch *Honours*
" and *Operations*, as can belong to none,
" but the *ſupreme* God; and yet, being
" plainly a diſtinct *Perſon* from the *Father*,
" muſt of Neceſſity be *his Son*, of one
" and the ſame *Nature* and *Eſſence* with
" the Father, and therefore one and
" the *ſame God*: That this *Jeſus Chriſt*
" *the Son of God*, being equally the *Creator*
" of the World, has, on that Account, the
" ſame *original Right* of *Dominion* with
" him; but then, having likewiſe *redeemed*
" *us by his Blood*, has thereby acquired all
" that *additional Title* to our Subjection, that
" ſuch a beneficial Performance can give
" him; beſides the particular *Tie* of our *Al-*
" *legiance*, as *Chriſtians*, and Subjects to him,
" who has ſet up a *Kingdom* on Earth, in
" Oppoſition to the Power of *Satan*. And
" the natural *Effect* of our believing all
" this, muſt be — a *reverential Regard*
" and *Veneration* for his Memory, and a
" juſt *Eſteem* of the *Redemption* he has
" purchaſed for us, together with every
" Expreſſion of *Love* and *Gratitude* to his
" Perſon, as he is *our Jeſus*; a diligent
" *Attention* to his *Inſtructions* and *Admo-*
" *nitions*, as he is *our Prophet*; an entire
" *Dependance* on his *Propitiation*, and *Inter-*
" *ceſſion* with God, as he is *our Prieſt*; *Sub-*
" *jection* to his Authority, and *Reliance* on
" his Protection, as he is *our King*; and a
" *Conformity* to the *Holineſs* of his Life, as
" he is *the Chriſt*, from whom we derive our
" *Appellation*; a firm *Aſſurance* in the
" *Efficacy* and *Meritoriouſneſs* of what he
" hath done and ſuffered for us; an ample
" *Encouragement* to pay him divine Honour
" and Adoration, and a *Behaviour* ſuitable to
" the Dignity of our Nature aſſumed by him,
" as he is *the Son of God*; and, laſtly, *Obe-*
" *dience* to his Commands in *doing* or *ſuf-*
" *fering* according to his Pleaſure; *Oppo-*
" *ſition* to the *Works of Darkneſs*, which
" are injurious to his Kingdom; *Honour*
" and *Reverence* to him upon all Occaſions,
" as well as *Hope* and *Confidence* in him, un-
" der all Diſcouragements, as he *is our Lord*,
" and (*a*) *rich unto all, that call upon him.*

(*a*) Rom. x. 12.



A R-

CHAP. III. SECT I.

ARTICLE III.

* Who was conceived by the Holy Ghoſt.

The EXPOSITION.

AFTER the Profeſſion of our Lord's divine *Filiation*, and *Dominion* over us, the *Creed* proceeds to inform us of his *human* Nature, and what *wonderful* Things he did for us, when *he came down from Heaven, and was incarnate.* His human Nature is not indeed expreſly mentioned in the Creed; but, in the *Articles*, ſubſequent to this, of his *Birth*, *Paſſion*, *Crucifixion*, *Death*, *Burial*, *&c.* it is ſufficiently implied, and cannot but occur to every Man's Thoughts upon the firſt Mention of his *Conception.*

Why the Son *was* incarnate.

WHY the Son of God, the *ſecond* Perſon in the ever-bleſſed *Trinity*, was appointed to take our Nature upon him, rather than the *firſt*, or the *third*, the Apoſtle ſeems to ſuggeſt a Reaſon, when he tells us, that *(a) in him we have Redemption through his Blood, even the Forgiveneſs of our Sins, for by him were all Things created, that are in Heaven and Earth; all Things were created by him, and for him:* Meaning, that he, who *created* the World, was the fitteſt Perſon to *reſtore* it. For who ſo proper to *redeem* us, as he, who *made* us? who ſo proper to become our *Mediator*, as he, who is the *middle Perſon* in the holy *Trinity*, between the *Father*, and the bleſſed *Spirit?* and who ſo proper to make us *the Children of God by Adoption and Grace*, as he, who is the *natural*, and only-begotten Son, *(b) the Brightneſs of his Father's Glory, and the expreſs Image of his Perſon?*

That he was promiſed *by the Prophets.*

THE firſt Notice we have of the World's *Redeemer* is in that *Declaration* of God, *(c) that the Seed of the Woman ſhould bruiſe the Serpent's Head*; and that, in order to accompliſh this, he ſhould, in a very uncommon and *miraculous* Manner, aſſume human Nature, we have ſundry plain *Predictions* to aſſure us. When therefore we find the ſacred *Penmen* declaring, that *(d) the Lord hath created a new Thing in the Earth, a Woman ſhall compaſs a Man*; for *(e) behold a Virgin ſhall conceive, and bear a Son, and ſhall call his Name* Emmanuel; whereupon the Prophet, (by way of *Anticipation*) breaks out into this Rapture of *Joy*, *(f) Unto us a Child is born*, (which denotes his *Humanity*) *unto us a Son is given*, (which relates to his *Divinity*) *and the Government ſhall be upon his Shoulder*, with many more *Characters* of the like Nature; we cannot but infer, that this extraordinary Perſon, as he was to be *the Lord from Heaven*, ſo was he likewiſe to be *a perfect Man, of a reaſonable Soul, and human Fleſh ſubſiſting.*

(g) *GREAT, without all Controverſy, is this Myſtery of Godlineſs, God's Manifeſtation in the Fleſh.* In what manner this ineffable Union of two ſo different Natures was effected, it is not in Man to define. All that we have to do in this Matter, is, ſilently to *admire* what we cannot comprehend, and carefully to attend to what God has been pleaſed to diſcover unto us in his ſacred *Records:* And, to this Purpoſe we may obſerve, when the Scriptures tell us, concerning our bleſſed Saviour, that *(h) in the Fulneſs of Time God ſent for his Son, made of a Woman, and made under the Law*; that *(i) he ſent him in our Likeneſs, (k) partaking of Fleſh and Blood*, and *(l) aſſuming the Seed of* Abraham; that

Did aſſume an human Body.

* In this *Article*, as it is expreſs'd in the *Apoſtle's Creed*, there is a manifeſt *Diſtinction* between the *Conception* of Jeſus, and his *Nativity*, whereof the *former* is aſcrib'd to the *Holy Ghoſt*, and the *latter* to the *bleſſed Virgin*; but, in the ancient Creeds, there was no ſuch Diſtinction, for the *whole* Article ran in this wiſe; —— *Who was born of the Holy Ghoſt, of the Virgin Mary*, where the Word *born* extended not only to his *Nativity*, but to his *Conception*, and *Generation* likewiſe. Now this Alteration ſeems to have been made in our preſent Creed, more *diſtinctly* to expreſs the *Operation of the Holy Ghoſt* in the *Generation* of our Saviour, and the *Share*, which the *bleſſed Virgin*, his Mother, had therein: For, as it rightly enough reſtrains his *Birth* to his Mother, becauſe there neither was, nor needed any *Concurrence* of the Holy Ghoſt in this Reſpect; ſo it ſufficiently intimates her *Intereſt* in the *Conception* of him, becauſe *Conception*, by whatever *Concurrence* it is accompliſh'd, is the proper Part of the Mother. *Pearſon*, and *Barrow* on the Creed, and *Towerſon* on the Cat.

(*a*) Col. i. 14, 16. (*b*) Heb i. 3. (*c*) Gen. iii. 15. (*d*) Jer. xxxi. 22. (*e*) Iſa. vii 14. (*f*) Iſa. ix. 6. (*g*) 1 Tim. iii. 16. (*h*) Gal. iv. 4. (*i*) Rom. viii. 3. (*k*) Heb. ii. 14. (*l*) Ver. 6.

that he *(a) took on him the Form of a Servant*; was made in the Likeneſs of Man; and, in ſhort, was ſuch a Man, (*b*) *as was* Adam, *by whom came Sin*, and (Sin only excepted) (*c*) *in every Thing like unto his Brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful High-Prieſt:* It certainly deſigns that we ſhould believe, that he had not * a *viſionary* and *ſuppoſitious*, but a *true* and *real* Body, *figur'd* and *circumſcrib'd* as ours, made of the ſame *Materials*, Fleſh and Blood, and ſubject to the ſame *Accidents*, *Infirmities*, and *Neceſſities*.

AND indeed, if we attend a little to the *Actions* and *Sufferings* of his Life; that he was born in the ſame State of Weakneſs, did grow by Degrees, and was nouriſh'd in the ſame manner, that other Infants are; did eat, and drink, and ſleep, was hungry, and thirſty, and weary, and the like; that when he came to *ſuffer*, his Body was torn with *Scourges*, pierc'd with *Nails*, tranſfix'd with a *Spear*, and by Death *ſeparated* from the Soul that enliven'd it; that, in this *Separation*, he was taken from the Croſs, wrapp'd in *Grave Clothes*, laid in a *Sepulchre*, and had *Spices* prepared for his *Embalment*; and that, after his Reſurrection, *(d)* he ſhewed the *Prints* of the *Nails* and *Spear* to his Diſciples, and convinced all his Followers, that it was his *real* Body, and not any *Phantom*, that appear'd to them: If we conſider theſe Things, I ſay, we cannot but acknowledge, that, as he came in the *Truth* and *Reality* of human Nature, ſo he *reaſſumed* it after his Reſurrection, and aſcended into Heaven in that ſame *ſubſtantial* Body, that *(e) was put to Death in the Fleſh, but quickned in the Spirit.*

AND fit indeed it was, that he ſhould aſſume an *human* Body, thereby to be qualified to *ſuffer*, and *die*, and ſo perform the ſeveral Parts and Offices of Man's Redemption; thereby to become a proper *Mediator* between God and Man, as partaking of the Nature of both *Parties*, which he was to *reconcile*; thereby to *teach* us, in a more *condeſcenſive* and familiar Manner, the Doctrines and Precepts of our moſt holy Religion; thereby to give us an *Example* of Humility and Meekneſs, of Patience and Submiſſion to the Will of God under the ſevereſt Trials and Afflictions; thereby to make the *Remedy for Sin and Uncleanneſs* proceed from the ſame Fountain, that its *Infection* did, and that, *(f) as by one Man's Diſobedience many were made Sinners, ſo, by the Obedience of one, many might be made righteous*; thereby to *conquer* and triumph over our *ghoſtly* Enemy, in that very *Nature*, which he had *baffled* and defeated before; and thereby to experience, in his own Perſon, the Miſeries and Infirmities of our Condition, that he might ſympathize with us in all our Sufferings, and relieve us in all our Diſtreſſes; for, (*g*) *in that himſelf hath ſuffered being tempted, he is* willing, as well as *able, to ſuccour them, that are tempted.*

For what Reaſons.

THESE are ſome of the Reaſons, that induc'd our Lord to take to himſelf an *human* Body like unto ours; and therefore it can hardly be ſuppoſed that he would omit the *nobler* Part of us, † *our Soul.* When therefore we read of him, that *(h) he increaſed in Wiſdom*, as well as *in Stature and Favour with God and Man*, as his Body was not

And an human Soul.

(*a*) Phil. ii. 7. (*b*) 1 Cor: xv. 21. (*c*) Heb. ii. 17.

* In the very firſt Beginning of *Chriſtianity*, the *real Incarnation* of our bleſſed Saviour was denied by *Simon Magus*; and *Menander*, who was his immediate Follower and Diſciple, affirm'd, *that Chriſt had no ſubſtantial Fleſh, but that his Body was a mere Phantaſm, or Apparition, which was neither really born, nor truly ſuffered.* Now, what induced them to embrace this *Hereſy*, might poſſibly be, the plain Evidence, there was in Scripture, of Chriſt's *Divinity*, from the *Miracles*, he wrought, and the divine *Titles*, *Attributes*, and *Operations* which are every where aſcrib'd to him: But then, being not able to conceive, how God could be *born* of a Woman, and *ſuffer*, and *die* on the Croſs, they imagin'd, that he was only a Man in *Appearance*; that he had no *material* Fleſh and Blood, but what Men commonly took to be ſuch, was all *fantaſtical* and *imaginary*, from whence the whole *Sect* had the Name of *Docetæ*, and *Phantaſiaſtæ*, and unto theſe, it is not improbable that St. *John*, in his firſt general *Epiſtle*, alludes, when he tells us, that there were then in the World certain *Antichriſtian Spirits, who would not confeſs that* Jeſus Chriſt *was come in the Fleſh*, 1 John iv. 3. *King's* Hiſt. of the Creed, *Wheatly* on the Creeds, and *Stephens* on the Union of the two Natures.

(*d*) Luke xxiv. 39 (*e*) 1 Pet iii 18. (*f*) Rom. v. 19. (*g*) Heb. ii. 18.

† There were ſome ancient *Hereticks*, who poſitively denied this, and maintain'd, that, in our Saviour's Aſſumption of an human Body, his *Divinity* ſupplied the Place of an *informing* Soul. Such were the *Arians*, who taught that Chriſt had nothing of Man, but the *Fleſh*, with which the *divine Word* was conjoin'd inſtead of a *rational* Soul. The *Apollinarians* however differ'd a little from them in this Reſpect; for, as they made Man to conſiſt of *three* Parts, a *Body*, a *ſenſitive* Soul, and a *rational* one, they allow'd, that our Saviour had a *real* Body, and a *ſenſitive* Soul, *i. e.* ſuch a Soul, as all Animals are ſuppoſed to have; but then they denied, that he had a *rational* or intellectual Soul or Mind; for this, they ſay, was ſufficiently anſwered by the Inhabitation of his *Divinity*. *Pearſon* on the Creed, and *Wheatly* on the Nic. and Athen. Creeds.

(*h*) Luke ii. 52

the Subject of *Knowledge*, nor his divine Nature capable of *improving* in it, this *Increaſe of Wiſdom* can relate to nothing, but his *human* Soul, which was the *Seat* of his *finite* Underſtanding, (as it is diſtinguiſh'd from that of his *divine Nature*) and the Subject likewiſe of thoſe *Affections* of Pity and Compaſſion, of Joy and Grief, of Love and Anger, which ſo manifeſtly appeared in his whole Conduct. This is the Thing he means, when, in the mournful *Garden*, he ſays, (*a*) *my Soul is exceeding ſorrowful, even unto Death:* This the Thing, which, before its Departure from the Body, he committed to the Cuſtody of his heavenly *Father*; (*b*) *Father, into thy Hands I command my Spirit*; and this the precious Part of us, which we are exhorted above all Things, to take Care of; which thoſe, who *kill the Body*, cannot touch; which, though ſubject to *Paſſions* and Emotions here, is, in its own Nature, *immortal*, and lives, and acts in a ſeparate State, free and and unconfin'd, while the Body is in the Grave.

For what Reaſons.

OUR Saviour therefore had not been a *perfect* Man, had he been defective in this chief *conſtituent* Part of our Nature, nor could he properly have made a ſufficient *Atonement* for our Sins: For, if *ſuffering* conduces any thing towards their *Expiation*, it is certain, that the Body, of itſelf, is utterly incapable either of Pleaſure or Pain; that all the Perceptions of this kind do entirely depend upon the Conjunction, and Operation of the Soul; and that the Grief and Sorrow, the Dejection and Conſternation of Mind, which our Saviour underwent to the utmoſt, (and were indeed not the leaſt Part of his *Paſſion*) were excited in that ſpiritual Subſtance, where human Reaſon and Senſation both are repoſited. Since therefore our bleſſed Lord came into the World to repair the *Diſorders*, that Sin had wrought in our Nature; and ſince the Soul by Sin had ſuffered much more in all its *Faculties*, than the Body could poſſibly do, it hence became neceſſary, that, in order to make a full *Reparation*, and that the *whole Man* might partake of the Benefits of his Redemption, he ſhould be deficient in no *eſſential* Part, but have a *rational* Soul, as well as a *mortal* Body, *that in all Things he might be made like unto us.*

The two Natures diſtinct.

THUS was the whole, perfect, and compleat Nature of Man aſſum'd by the Son of God at his *Incarnation:* And as the divine Nature, after ſuch Aſſumption, could not *ceaſe* to be what it was *before*, could not be *commixed*, or *tranſmuted* into any other Subſtance, but muſt ſtill continue the *ſame*; he, who was God before by his *divine* Nature, was, by the *human* Nature, which he then aſſumed, made Man, and ſo became both God and Man in one Perſon. This is what the Account of his *Life*, and of the various *Actions* of it, differing in their *Kinds*, according to the different *Principles* from whence they did proceed, abundantly demonſtrates: And therefore good Reaſon had St. *Paul* to affirm, that *(c) the ſame Chriſt, who was made of the Seed of* David, *according to the Fleſh, was declared to be the Son of God with Power, according to the Spirit of Holineſs.*

But united in *one Perſon.*

HENCE it appears that there is a plain *Diſtinction* between the two Natures of Chriſt: But then, (*d*) ſince the *Characters* and *Paſſions*, belonging to him as *Man*, are too *inconſiſtent* with the divine Nature, to be aſcribed to him, conſidered ſimply *as God*; and ſince, on the other hand, the Characters and Powers belonging to him, as *God*, cannot poſſibly be aſcrib'd to him, conſidered ſimply *as Man*, and yet the ſame Properties, Paſſions, and Powers are attributed to one and the ſame *Perſon*; we muſt be conſtrained to acknowledge the *Identity* of the *Perſon* of Chriſt, and, at the ſame Time, the *Diſtinction* of the two Natures united in that Perſon.

AND indeed, upon the *Identity* of his Perſon, or his being but *one* Perſon, both as God and Man, does the *Virtue* and *Efficacy* of his *Sufferings* chiefly depend.*(e)* For, if he had been one Perſon *as God*, and another *as Man*, then all his *Sufferings*, as *Man*, would have been the Sufferings of an human or *finite* Creature, and ſo would have *terminated* in himſelf, without affecting any, much leſs all other Men, and without bearing the leaſt Proportion to the Sins committed againſt an *infinite* and eternal God. But now, by his being *both* God and Man in *one Perſon*, though he ſuffered only in his *Manhood*, yet were his Sufferings of infinite Value and Merit for all Men, becauſe they were the Sufferings of an infinite

(*a*) Matt. xxxvi. 38. (*b*) Luke xxiii. 46. (*c*) Rom. i. 3, 4. (*d*) *Fiddes's* Body, Vol. I. (*e*) *Beveridge* on the Church Cat.

nite and divine Perſon; inſomuch that when the *Jews* killed him, (*a*) *they killed the Prince of Life*; (*b*) *they crucified the Lord of Glory*; his Blood (*c*) *was the Blood of God*; and (*d*) *hereby perceive we the Love of God*, (ſays the *Apoſtle*) *becauſe he laid down his Life for us*. Nor is there any *Impropriety* in the Expreſſion: For, tho' it were incongruous to ſay, that God, were he God *only*, *could die for us*, yet there is no *Abſurdity* in it, when we affirm it of God, who was Man as well as God: The divine Nature, as ſuch, was certainly *exempt* from all Sufferings; but, becauſe *he*, who was truly God and Man in one Perſon, *laid down his Life* in our Stead, what was perform'd in the *human* Nature, upon account of that *intimate* Union, by a *Commutation of Properties* (as the *Ancients* call it) is transferr'd to the *divine*, and ſuch Actions are aſcrib'd to him, even (*e*) *being in the Form of God*, as could not be accompliſh'd otherwiſe, than as he was *in the Likeneſs of Man*.

This Perſon conceived by the Holy Ghoſt.

How he came to be *formed* into this *Likeneſs*, both the *Creed* and Scriptures alledge for its Cauſe the wonderful Operation of the *Holy Ghoſt*; not that it was ſo *incommunicably his*, as to exclude the other *two* Perſons in the Godhead from having any Concern in it. (*f*) The Union of the divine Nature is ſo *cloſe* and inſeparable, that it makes all ſuch *Actions*, as do not refer to their *perſonal Properties* and *Relations*, common to all the *three*; and yet, notwithſtanding this, becauſe *fructifying* and *ſanctifying*, in the Stile of Scripture, are generally attributed to the Influences of the bleſſed *Spirit*, therefore is the Action, we are now conſidering, in a more particular Manner, aſcribed to him. The firſt *Creation* of the World he began (*g*) by *moving*, or *brooding*, as it were, *upon the Face of the Waters*; and (*h*) *the Creation of a new Thing, in a Woman's compaſſing a Man*, he likewiſe began, by conveying a *Principle* and Power of *Fruitfulneſs* into a Perſon, otherwiſe incapable of it: And as, in the former Caſe, *without the Father, and the Son*, (*i*) *not any thing was made, that was made*, ſo in this the Co-operation of the whole undivided Trinity was employed, tho' the Work, in ſome Reſpects, is more eſpecially aſcrib'd to the *third* Perſon in it. Nor is this diſagreeable to the Analogy of the whole Goſpel-Diſpenſation, which ſuppoſes, all the Miracles under the *New Teſtament* (*k*) *to be wrought by one and the ſelf-ſame Spirit*; and therefore, (*l*) as the *Revelation* of divine Truths, the *Prediction* of future Events, the *Renovation* of Men's Minds, and the *Reformation* of their Manners, all the great and glorious Works of *Providence*, are, in a peculiar Manner, attributed to *him*, 'tis an eaſy Suppoſition, that he ſhould have the *chief* Honour and Office in this wonderful and ſupernatural Operation.

What Share the bleſſed Virgin had in it.

BUT though the *Conception* of our Lord is expreſly attributed to the Holy Ghoſt, without the leaſt Mention of the bleſſed Virgin's *Concurrence* in it; yet, as the Angel aſſures her that ſhe ſhould (*m*) *conceive, and bear a Son*, (*n*) we are not to ſuppoſe, that ſhe was excluded from having that Share, which, in like Caſes, is proper to other Mothers, in relation to the *Fruit of their Womb*. The Manner, in which the Operation is deſcrib'd to the Virgin, is this: (*o*) *The Holy Ghoſt ſhall come upon thee, and the Power of the higheſt ſhall over-ſhadow thee*; where we muſt obſerve, that (*p*) as, in the ordinary Courſe of Generation, the *female* Subſtance is not of Strength ſufficient to procreate a Child, without receiving Life and Vigour from the *Male*; and, as every Daughter of *Adam*, is, by Nature, impure, and cannot therefore *bring a clean Thing out of an unclean*; to ſupply theſe two Defects, the *Supervention* of the Holy Ghoſt was to prepare, ſanctify, and impregnate ſo much of the Virgin's Subſtance, as would conſtitute our Saviour's Body; and the divine Power *over-ſhadowing* her, was that *Virtue* and *Energy*, which ſupplied the Want of the *Vigour* and Embraces of a *maſculine* Parent. But as both theſe Actions are expreſſed in *general* and *modeſt Terms*, and their preciſe Meaning is utterly unknown to us; ſo are they a ſeaſonable Monition, here to *bound* our Curioſity, and forbid all farther Enquiry into what the Almighty Wiſdom has thought fit to *over-ſhadow*, and *veil* from our Eyes, as it were, with a *Cloud*. Only we may obſerve, that, as the Holy Ghoſt could not frame the human *Nature* of Chriſt out of his own *Subſtance*, becauſe his Eſſence is perfectly *ſimple* and

(*a*) Acts iii. 15. (*b*) 1 Cor. ii. 8. (*c*) Acts xx. 28. (*d*) 1 John iii. 16. (*e*) Phil. ii. 6, 7. (*f*) *Stanhope*'s Epiſt. and Goſp. (*g*) Gen. ii. 2. (*h*) Jer. xxxi. 22. (*i*) John i. 3. (*k*) 1 Cor. xii. 11. (*l*) *Barrow* on the Creed. (*m*) Luke i. 31. (*n*) *Pearſon* on the Creed. (*o*) Luke i. 33. (*p*) *Gil* on the Creed.

and *immaterial*, the *Whole* of it muſt proceed from the * Subſtance of the *Virgin*, and the Operation of the Holy Ghoſt † *extend* no farther, than to give Strength and Vivacity to what was otherwiſe torpid and unactive: And for this Reaſon (*a*) the holy Fathers, to prevent dangerous and unbecoming *Speculations* about a Point of ſo *ſacred* a Nature, are wont to aſſert, that our Saviour was conceived of the Holy Ghoſt, not *ſeminally*, but *operatively*; not *by Copulation*, but *by Power*; not *of the Subſtance of the Spirit*, but *by the Virtue of it*; and farther than this, they ſay, *who can declare his Generation*, or exactly deſcribe the Manner of a Performance ſo wonderful and *ſublime?*

And for what Reaſon.

(b) BLESSED art thou among Women, is Part of the *Salutation*, which the Angel gives the Virgin, upon the Account of her being ſo *highly favour'd by God*, as to be made choice of for *the Mother of our Lord*; and 'tis the Suppoſition of ſome, that therefore he made choice of her, becauſe the diſtinguiſhing *Graces* both of her Body and Mind were not a little conducive to the better and more perfect *Conformation* of our Lord's ſacred Perſon. However this be, the Ancients have obſerved, that the Strength of her *Faith* was a more powerful Recommendation, than any *external* Qualifications. At the Angel's firſt Addreſs indeed, ſhe ſeem'd to be ſomewhat *diffident*, (as who might not doubt of an Event ſo unparalelled?) but when ſhe came to conſider the *Authority* of the Meſſenger, who was come from the God of Truth; the *Argument* he uſed concerning his Omnipotence, to which *nothing was impoſſible*; (*c*) the *Inſtance* of the like Miracle, in the Caſe of *her Couſin Elizabeth*, who, in *her old Age*, *had conceived a Son*; and the general *Expectation* of the *Jews*, at that Time, of a *Meſſias* to be born in a very extraordinary manner, ſhe received the amazing Meſſage with a becoming *Modeſty* and Meekneſs; ſhe reſign'd herſelf intirely to the divine Will and Pleaſure; and by the *Chearfulneſs* of her Obedience, made way for that great Bleſſing, which was then approaching her, *(d) Behold the Handmaid of the Lord*, ſays ſhe, *be it to me according to thy Word*; which, whether it is a *Wiſh* or *Conſent* only, the ‡ general Opinion of the Fathers has made it a kind of *Tradition* in the Church, that, in uttering of theſe Words, ſhe conceived the *celeſtial Seed*, and, in due Time, brought forth her Son and Saviour.

Why Chriſt was thus wonderfully conceived.

BUT though our bleſſed Saviour, in his *human* Nature, was certainly *made of a Woman*, yet, as he was the Son of God by an *eternal Generation*, there was a kind of *Congruity*, in having his *Conception* effected by a *ſupernatural* Power, that his *extraordinary* Generation *as Man*, when it came to be known, might be a *Means* to make his other more ſublime and *ineffable Generation* meet with better Credit: And becauſe, in the *ordinary* Propagation of our Nature, Sin and Corruption are *inſeparable*, there was a Neceſſity, that, when it was to be aſſumed into a *perſonal* Conjunction with *Deity*, it ſhould, in its *initial Rudiments* be ſanctified by the *Spirit of Holineſs*, in order to become a proper Habitation for him, *(e) who is of purer Eyes than to behold Evil.* In ſhort, as each *Perſon* in the ever-bleſſed Trinity bore a Part in the wonderful Work of Man's *Redemption*, *God the Son*, out of his tender Love to Mankind, offered himſelf to take human Nature upon him, the better to accompliſh its Salvation; *God the Father*, out of his kind Concern for our

* In oppoſition to this, there were ſome *Hereticks*, who ſuppoſed, that our Saviour received no Part of his *material Subſtance* from the *Seed* of the Virgin, but that he aſſumed to himſelf an *heavenly* Body, which paſſed through her, as Water through a *Pipe*, without receiving from her the leaſt Tincture, and therefore they aſſerted, that *tho' he was born* BY Mary, *yet he was not born* OF Mary; whilſt others as wildly maintained, that, in his coming down from Heaven, he fram'd to himſelf a Body, made of the four *Elements*, or of the Stars, and other *celeſtial* Matter, in which he ſuffered and died. *King*'s Hiſt. of the Creed.

† It was requiſite indeed, that the human Nature, or *fleſhly Maſs* ſhould be formed out of the *Subſtance* of the Virgin *Mary*, without the Concurrence of Man, but not without the Power of the Holy Ghoſt. It was his Work therefore to prepare the *Matter* for this *Formation*, then actually to *form* and organize it, and, after that, to *animate* it, *i. e.* to infuſe into it the ſpiritual Part, or Soul; all which is comprehended under the Word *Conception:* And, from this extraordinary Operation, Chriſt's Soul became *holy*, and free from all Sin and Pollution, as, by the ſame Means, the *fleſhly Subſtance* became *pure*, and ſpotleſs, and fit to be united to the Godhead. *Edwards*'s Body, Vol. I.

(*a*) *Barrow* on the Creed. (*b*) Luke i. 28. (*c*) Ver. 36, 37. (*d*) Ver. 38.

‡ This is affirm'd by *Irenæus*, Lib. 1. Chap. 33; by *Tertullian*, in his Book *de Carne Chriſti*; by *Athanaſius* in his *Orat. de Sanctâ Deiparâ*, and divers others.

(*e*) Hab. i. 13.

our loſt Condition, was graciouſly pleaſed to accept of the Offer; and *to God the Holy Ghoſt, as he is the Lord and Giver of Life*, did properly belong the Province of *preparing* the Subſtance, in which the Son of God was to be incarnate; of *conſecrating* him in the Womb to the high *Offices*, for which he was appointed, and ordering Matters ſo, that, when he came to offer *his Soul a Sacrifice for the Sins of the World*, he ſhould be found of God, *(a) a Lamb without Blemiſh and without Spot.*

THESE are ſome of the Reaſons, why the Son of God was conceived of the Holy Ghoſt: And may it not well be preſum'd likewiſe, that hereby he intended to give us an *high* Senſe of the Dignity of our Nature, which he hath *ennobled* by uniting it to his Divinity; to inſpire us with a *generous* Diſdain of all ſuch Vices, as not only *debaſe* us, but are abhorrent likewiſe to the Spirit of *Purity*; and, in Conformity to his Conception, to excite our Care, that *we, being faſhioned according to his Likeneſs, (b) may be born, not of Blood, nor by the Will of the Fleſh, nor by the Will of Man, but of God.*

The OBJECTION.

" BUT what Reaſons ſoever we may " give for the *Incarnation* of the Son " of God; yet if, upon Examination, they " appear to be inconſiſtent *(c)* with the No- " tions we have of the *unlimited* Perfections " of the ſupreme Being, and the *finite* Pro- " perties of Man, (between which the *Dif- " ference* is ſo wide and immenſurable, as " ſeems to render them incapable of being " join'd together in one and the ſame *Per- " ſon*) we muſt be forced to give them up. " Now, what can be more incongruous, " than for *Perfection* and *Happineſs* to mix " with *Infirmity* and *Miſery*, or for the " Deity to join itſelf with vile Duſt and " Aſhes? For the greateſt *Prince* in the " World to match with the pooreſt and " moſt abject *Beggar*, is a Degradation, " that bears no Compariſon with this: If " therefore there was any other *Method* of " *taking away the Sins of the World*, and " reſtoring lapſed Man to the Happineſs " he had forfeited, *this*, one would think, " ſhould never have been projected; and, " when it lay in the Breaſt of divine Mercy " to forgive a World of Sinners without re- " quiring any Commutation at all, what oc- " caſion was there of having recourſe to ſo " extraordinary a Remedy? But admitted " the Neceſſity for Chriſt's coming into the " World was indiſpenſible; yet why did " not he come at *once*, without the Forma- " lity of an human *Conception*, or ſub- " miting to the narrow Confinement of a " *Virgin's Womb?* Why did not he come " in the full Diſplay of his *Father's Glory*, " with an heavenly Hoſt attending him, and " himſelf inveſted with ſome *celeſtial* Body, " to pronounce a general *Pardon*, and to " proclaim the new Laws and Ordinances " of Heaven? When he bowed the Heavens, " and came down upon Mount *Sinai*, he " made an Appearance like himſelf. *(d) " He rode upon the Cherubims, and did fly, " he came flying upon the Wings of the Wind*, " and, with all the *Enſigns* of Majeſty, " injected Terror, and commanded Reve- " rence, and gave a *Sanction* to his Laws: " But how could that be expected in a " Perſon, who endeavoured to conceal his " real *Character*; who, coming to inſtruct " the World, diveſted himſelf of all Au- " thority, and aſſumed *a Form*, that was " very little qualified to give Laws to Man- " kind? *With God indeed nothing is im- " poſſible:* And therefore, though we ſhould " allow it in his Power to confine *Immen- " ſity*, and to make *Eternity* have a Begin- " ning, (which are Things hard of Di- " geſtion) yet we cannot conceive, how he " could provide for the *immaculate* Concep- " tion of his Son. For, *(e)* ſince his Mo- " ther herſelf *was conceived and born in " Sin*, as all Mankind are, if from her " he had his whole human Nature, he " muſt neceſſarily partake of that *original* " Stain, wherewith ſhe was infected; and " yet, if he had *any Part* of it from the " Holy Ghoſt, or, if the Holy Ghoſt did " but *refine* and *purify* that Subſtance of " the Mother, whereof his Body was com- " poſed, we cannot ſee, why the Right of " *Paternity* may not belong to the *third*, " rather than the *firſt* Perſon in the Tri- " nity.

(a) 1 Pet. i. 19. *(b)* John i. 13. *(c) Atterbury's* Serm. *(d)* Pſal. xviii. 9, &c. *(e) Cil* on the Creed.

" nity. To be begotten of a *God* however, " and ſometimes of a *Virgin* too, was, of " old, ſo common a Fiction in every *great* " Man's Character, who made a ſurprizing " Figure in the World, that it may be ſup- " pos'd, ſomething *marvellous* of this Kind " was thought proper to *open* the Hiſtory " of our Saviour's Life, rather than aſcribe " his *Humanity* to the *Intervention* of ſo " mean a Man, as *Joſeph*, the Carpenter; " tho' he is (*a*) generally ſaid to be his " *Father*, as well as (*b*) *Mary*'s *Husband*, " and had indeed the firſt Intelligence of " the Virgin's *Pregnancy*."

Anſwered, by ſhewing the Incomprehenſibleneſs *of the* Union *of the two Natures in Chriſt.*

ST. *PAUL*, ſpeaking of the wonderful Work of Chriſt's Incarnation, calls it (*c*) *the Myſtery of God, even the Father, and of Chriſt*; (*d*) the *hidden Wiſdom of God, which none of the Princes of this World knew*, and which (according to St. *Peter*) the very (*e*) *Angels themſelves deſire to look into*: And therefore well may the *Reaſoners* of this World be at a Loſs, when they pretend to ſearch into the *deep Things* of God, and to determine, in ſuch obſcure Points as this, what is poſſible or impoſſible to be accompliſh'd by Almighty Wiſdom or Power. (*f*) In this *Myſtery* indeed, God and Man, two widely different Subjects, are concern'd; but are our Notions of theſe two Beings ſo full every Way, and ſo diſtinct and clear, as to ſatisfy us, that ſuch an *Union* is in itſelf repugnant, and altogether impoſſible? Would we impartially conſider what paſſes within our Minds, when we employ them in ſuch *nice* Diſquiſitions, we ſhould find, that all, that occurs there, is *Darkneſs* and *Confuſion*; and that we can diſcern too little of either of theſe Natures, to be able to pronounce, with any Aſſurance, that it is *impoſſible* for them to be join'd together in one *Perſon*.

As likewiſe of that *between our Souls and Bodies.*

WE have no juſt Idea indeed in what Way this Union may be effected; nor can we diſcern the *Manner* of that *Union*, which interferes between our Souls and Bodies. The moſt piercing Wit among the Sons of Men cannot ſay, that he perceives plainly, how a *corporeal* can be join'd to an *incorporeal* Being, and what are thoſe common *Ties* and Ligaments, that hold them together; how they *act* upon each other; move, and are moved by *Turns*; and what Kind of *Contact* that is, by which ſuch Motions are mutually communicated: And, if he cannot comprehend this *Union*, which his own Experience teaches him, and which he can no more doubt of, than he can of his own *Being* and Subſiſtence, how can it be ſuppos'd, that his weak and limited Underſtanding ſhould be able to form any *adequate* Notion of the infinitely more dark and difficult Queſtion, the cloſe *Conjunction* of the Deity with the Manhood of Chriſt.

No Diſparagement *to Chriſt to be* conceived *of the bleſſed Virgin.*

THE *Manhood* of Chriſt indeed ſprang but from a mean *Original*, if we conſider his Mother's poor Circumſtances of Life; but, as God is no *Reſpecter of Perſons*, in that Regard there might be ſeveral *diſtinguiſhing* Qualities, ſuch as her Purity and Chaſtity, her Faith and Obedience, her Humility and Meekneſs, (conſpicuous in the Mention made of her in the Goſpel) that might recommend her to the divine Favour and Acceptance. However this be, we cannot but think of God, that *he is* (*g*) *altogether ſuch an one as ourſelves*, when we look upon his *Condeſcenſions* in ſuch a Light, as to eſteem them any *Diminution* of his Honour. Our Ill-nature, and Pride, and Folly (as indeed all Pride is *Folly*) will not ſuffer us perhaps to *ſtoop* beneath ourſelves for the Benefit of others, and thence we conclude, that it may not become the *ſupreme Majeſty* to do ſo: But God, *whoſe Ways are not as our Ways*, and whoſe *Thoughts* are as far above our low and narrow Thoughts, as the *Heavens are higher than the Earth*, did not diſdain to become Man for the Good of Mankind, and, as much as the *Divinity* is capable of being *ſo*, to become *miſerable*, in order to make us happy. Our Fear of being *deſpiſed*, if we ſhould abuſe ourſelves too much, may be ſome Reaſon for our maintaining a *Port*, and keeping the lower Claſs of Mankind at a *Diſtance*: But what (*h*) the *Orator* ſays to the Emperor concerning *earthly* Kings and Potentates, is much more applicable to the *Lord of Glory*; *he, that is at the Top, and can riſe no higher, has yet this one Way left to become greater, by ſtooping beneath himſelf*, which he may ſafely do, *being ſecure of his own Greatneſs*: So that, upon the whole, it was no *Diſparagement* to the Son of God to become Man, but an ample Demonſtration of his *Goodneſs*, which is the higheſt *Glory* of the divine Nature.

THE

(*a*) Mat. xiii, 55. Luke iii. 23. John i. 45. and vi. 42. (*b*) Matt. i. 16. 19. (*c*) Col. ii. 2. (*d*) 1 Cor. ii. 7, 8. (*e*) 1 Pet. i. 12. (*f*) *Atterbury*'s Ser. Vol. III. (*g*) Pſal. v. 21. (*h*) *Pliny*, in his Speech to *Trajan*.

This best answers the Ends of his Coming into the World.

THE Goodneſs and Wiſdom of God, no doubt, could have found out other *Expedients*, beſides this of the *Incarnation*, for the Pardon of Sin, and the Salvation of Mankind; but, ſince this, and no other, was made uſe of, we muſt needs think it the moſt *proper* of any, and the beſt proportion'd to thoſe Ends and Purpoſes, for which it was deſign'd. Now the great *End* of the Son of God's coming into the World (as the Apoſtle informs us) was this,—(*a*) *Ye know, that he was manifeſted to take away our Sins, and in him is no Sin:* But how is it, that he takes away our Sins? Is it not by the *Doctrine*, he taught us; by the *Example*, he ſet us; by the *Interceſſion*, he makes for us; and by the *Incitements* to Virtue and Piety, which, in the Diſpenſation of his *Goſpel*, he every where propounds to us?

Which was to teach us,

WHATEVER other *Means* therefore we may ſuppoſe the divine Wiſdom capable of inventing, this ſeems to be abſolutely neceſſary, that *Rules* and *Inſtructions* ſhould be given us (in a Manner *adapted* to our Capacity) how we are to walk before God *in all well-pleaſing*. The *Laws*, which God deliver'd from Mount *Sinai*, were very well calculated for this Purpoſe; but then they were attended with ſuch Tokens of Horror, and tremendous *Majeſty*, as mortal Creatures were not able to bear; for (*b*) *they, who heard the Voice, intreated* (as the ſacred Hiſtory tells us) *that the Word ſhould not be ſpoken to them any more; and ſo terrible was the Sight, that even* Moſes *ſaid, I exceedingly fear and quake.* This Method might be of uſe to inject Terror into a People of a *ſlaviſh* Diſpoſition, who were ſway'd by *Fear*, more than any other Motive; but it did not ſuit with the *Goſpel of Peace*, and (*c*) *that Spirit of Adoption, whereby we cry Abba, Father.* When therefore our Saviour came upon that gracious Meſſage from Heaven, he laid aſide that awful Majeſty, *which no Man can approach unto*, and condeſcended to live among Men, with all the *Gentleneſs* and *Meekneſs* of the *human* Nature, and all the *Authority* of the *divine*. By this Means his Inſtructions became *familiar* to us, and his *Example*, as well as his *Precepts*, pointed out to us the Way to eternal Life.

Set us an Example.

IT was neceſſary indeed that an *Example* of abſolute *Perfection* ſhould be given to the World, and given by one of the ſame Nature with ourſelves, otherwiſe it might be an Example for Angels and Spirits, but not for Men: But ſuch an Example the Son of God *incarnate* only could give, becauſe it was impoſſible for any created Being, under all the Infirmities and Temptations incident to human Nature, to live up to ſuch a divine *Height* and Excellency of all Perfection, as our Saviour did; whoſe Deſign, in aſſuming our Nature, was not to teach us the *Wiſdom of this World*, the Method of acquiring Riches and Honours, and the like, but to ſet before our Eyes the mean and worthleſs *Vanity* of theſe Things; to ſhew us a *Pattern* of *Contentment* in a low Condition; of *Victory*, under Temptations; of *Patience* and Meekneſs, under the ſevereſt Trials and Afflictions; and (what was a glorious and God-like Deſign) to diſcover to us the Way to Happineſs in the worſt Circumſtances, that can poſſibly befal our mortal State.

And be our Mediator.

IN the State of Defection, whereinto we had fallen, it was neceſſary likewiſe to have a *Mediator*, and ſuch a Mediator, as, (*d*) coming with divine *Power* and Authority, and yet with the *Affability* and Acceſſibleneſs of a Man, might be fully qualified to perform that *Office*, *viz.* to *offer* us Terms of Reconciliation, as he was *God*, and to *treat* with us upon thoſe Terms, in a familiar Manner, as he was *Man*; (*e*) and *for this Cauſe he is the Mediator* (as the Apoſtle ſpeaks) *of the New Teſtament, that by Means of Death for the Redemption of the Tranſgreſſions, that were under the* firſt *Teſtament, they, who are called, might receive the* Promiſe *of eternal Inheritance.*

THESE may be look'd upon as ſome *Reaſons* for God's aſſuming human Nature: But what if he, willing to give us the greateſt *Aſſurance* of his Compaſſion for our Infirmities, and Deſire of our Happineſs, to lay us under the ſtrongeſt *Obligations* to what is the only *Principle* of acceptable Obedience, our *Love* of him, to ſhew the Heinouſneſs of Sin, and (*f*) *make known the exceeding Riches of his Grace in his Kindneſs towards us through Chriſt Jeſus*, choſe this Way for the Redemption of the World; here certainly is great Cauſe of *Thankfulneſs*, but none ſurely of *Cavil* and Exception. We have infinite Reaſon to *acknowledge* and admire his Goodneſs, but none at all to *upbraid* him with his Kindneſs, or to quarrel with him for having deſcended ſo much beneath himſelf to teſtify

(*a*) 1 John iii. 5. (*b*) Heb. xii. 19, &c. (*c*) Rom. viii. 15. (*d*) *Scot's* Mediator. (*e*) Heb. ix. 15. (*f*) Eph. ii. 7.

teſtify his Love to us, and tender Concern for our Welfare.

That he contracted no Stain by his Conception.

ST. *PAUL*, ſpeaking of Chriſt, expreſſes himſelf in this Manner: (*a*) *God made him to be Sin for us, who himſelf knew no Sin*; but his Meaning is not, that he contracted any Pollution by his *Incarnation*, but only that thereby he aſſum'd a Body, which enabled him to be made a *Sacrifice for Sin*. For how could he, who came into the World to *cleanſe* others, perform that Office regularly, unleſs himſelf was perfectly clean? The Stain of our *common Parent* ſticks ſo cloſe to every *natural* Deſcendant of his, that the human Nature cannot be *ordinarily* communicated without it: And hence it became abſolutely *neceſſary*, that the *Saviour* and *Sanctifier* of the World ſhould be *conceived* in a Method different from the *uſual* Courſe of Nature. As therefore he ſprung from the immediate *Operation* of that *Spirit*, who is the Fountain of all *Holineſs* and Purity, and that Operation too upon the Perſon of an *undefiled* and bleſſed Virgin, he effectually provided againſt all the Difficulties of *common* Births, and made the Fruit of her Womb (as the *Angel* moſt emphatically ſtiles it) (*b*) *that holy Thing, which ſhould be born of her.*

And was not the Son *of the Holy Ghoſt.*

WE muſt obſerve however, that, though the Holy Ghoſt concurr'd, by a *ſpecial* Act of his Power, towards the *Conception* of Chriſt; yet, as he did not concur by way of *material* Agent, or by any Communication of his *Subſtance*, but purely as an *efficient*, or operative Power of God, he cannot, with any Propriety, be ſtiled the *Father* of Chriſt. The *paternal* Relation, we know, is founded on the Father's begetting a Son of his own *Likeneſs* and Subſtance; but this, in the preſent Caſe, could not be done, becauſe the *Subſtance* of the Holy Ghoſt is *divine*, uncreated, and eternal, whereas the Subſtance of *Chriſt*, conceived in the Virgin, was *human*, created, and had a Beginning in Time. Now, as Chriſt, the *ſecond* Perſon in the Trinity, had an *Exiſtence*, before he was incarnate, his Incarnation made no Alteration in his *Perſonality*; and therefore, tho' he was *incorporated* by the Influence of the Holy Ghoſt, yet was he the Son of God before, in virtue of that *Exiſtence*, he had of him by an ineffable *Generation*, and of that *Relation*, he bore to him from all Eternity; and therefore, properly ſpeaking, he could only be called the *Son of God*, though, according to outward *Eſteem*, he is ſometimes in Scripture ſaid to be the Son of *Joſeph*.

How Joſeph *came to* perceive *the Virgin to be* with Child.

AMONG the *Jews* (*c*) it was an uſual Thing, that, a conſiderable Time ſhould intervene between the *Eſpouſals* of the Parties to be married, and that ſolemn *Contract*, which ended in *Conſummation*. Before theſe Eſpouſals the young Women lived a very *retired* Life in Apartments of their own, where no Men were allow'd to enter, but, after the *eſpouſal* Ceremony, they were allowed the Converſation of the Man, that was to be their Husband; and during this Interval it was, that *Joſeph* diſcovered his intended Wife to be with Child. With Child by himſelf he knew ſhe was not: With an *Adultreſs* to live, was both a Sin, and a Shame: To *expoſe* her Life and Reputation upon this Account, he was loath; and therefore to put her away *privily* was his laſt Reſolve; when, in the midſt of theſe diſtracting Thoughts, an *Angel*, who was ſent to reveal the whole Secret to him, ſet his Mind perfectly at Eaſe, as appears from his whole Conduct afterwards.

His after Behaviour *cleared her* Innocence.

(*d*) *JEALOUSY*, we are told by the wiſe King, is *the Rage of a Man. In the Day of his Vengeance he will not ſpare: He will not regard any Ranſom; neither will he be content, though thou giveſt him many Gifts*; and therefore we may ſuppoſe, that had *Joſeph* entertain'd any *Suſpicion* prejudicial to the *Virgin's* Honour, he would not have lived ſo contentedly with her, and attended her, and her Child, wherever they were compell'd to go. From the very firſt he could expect nothing, but *Trouble* and Danger to himſelf, by his Adherence to them. When *Herod* began his Perſecution of the Child with a terrible *Maſſacre*, for the Prevention of that, he willingly fled with them into *Egypt*; there continued till the Danger was over; and then returned to *Nazareth*, where he ſupported them all along with the Fruits of his Labour. But, to expoſe himſelf to theſe Inconveniences, what other Motive could he poſſibly have, than a full Conviction of the Truth of the *Angel's* Revelation, (*e*) *That, what was conceived in her, was of the Holy Ghoſt.* It is not without excellent good Reaſon therefore,

(*a*) 2 Cor. v. 21. (*b*) Luke i. 35. (*c*) *Stanhope's* Epiſt. and Goſp. Vol. I. (*d*) Prov. vi. 34, 35. (*e*) Matt. i. 20.

fore, that the Perſon, made choice of to be firſt *ſatisfied* in this extraordinary Conception, ſhould be *Joſeph*; one, whoſe *Relation* to the holy Mother not only made him moſt *concern'd* to have Satisfaction given him of her Virtue, but would naturally render him very *cautious* likewiſe, not himſelf to be *impoſed on* in this Matter.; and, as he has the Character of a *juſt Man* in Scripture, cannot be ſuppoſed capable of entering into a *Conſpiracy* to impoſe upon the *Evangeliſts*, in the Account, which they give the World of this *miraculous* Conception.

And the Evangelists Account hereof no ways Romantick.

THE *Evangeliſts* indeed are *plain* and ſimple Writers; There is no *Air* of *Fiction* or *Romance* in what they relate. The *Introduction* to our Saviour's Life, we own, contains a wonderful *Tranſaction*, but then it is no more, than what was atteſted to them by Perſons of *Integrity*, who were chiefly concern'd in the Thing, and what our Saviour himſelf, *(a) when he came to be manifeſted to* Iſrael, abundantly prov'd by his *Miracles*, and thoſe many potent Arguments, which confirm'd his Doctrine. It is no more, than what the *Prophets* had foretold, and what might reaſonably be expected, when a Perſon ſo *extraordinary*, as the Son of God, aſſumed human Nature. As therefore the *ſupreme* Being cannot be confin'd to *Laws* of his own Inſtitution, and, in making a Man of the *Duſt of the Earth*, or any other Way contrary to *natural* Generation, nay, in making a Woman, that is *old* and barren, conceive and fructify, the Wonder is as *great*, as what we here attribute to the *Holy Ghoſt*; there is no Reaſon to have Recourſe to the *Fiction* of *Poets* upon this Occaſion, but very much to ſuppoſe, that the *Pretenders* of this Kind (ſuch as were ſubſequent to our Saviour's Time, I mean) laid Claim to a wonderful *Conception and Nativity*, merely to *ape his*, and ſo, by a fond *Imitation* of what they thought *miraculous* in him, gave *Teſtimony* to the Truth of what the *Evangeliſts* have related.

DISSERTATION IX.

The Union of the two Natures in CHRIST.

A *Particular* Explication how this *myſterious* Union is effected, or in what Manner two *perfect* Natures are *conjoin'd* together, and yet remain *diſtinct*, in *one* Perſon, is what no Man in his Senſes would pretend to attempt: And therefore all, that can be expected from us, in a Matter of ſuch Obſcurity, will be to enquire, 1*ſt*, What Grounds, we have from *Scripture*, to believe it *true*; 2*dly*, What *Light*, we have from *Reaſon*, to eſteem it *poſſible*; and, 3*dly*, Upon what *Accounts* it was highly *expedient* in the *Perſon* of our Saviour Chriſt.

The Union of two Natures in the Perſon of Chriſt.

Now when we read in Scripture, *(b) That great is the Myſtery of Godlineſs, God was manifeſt in the Fleſh*; *(c) That of the Fathers, as concerning the Fleſh, Chriſt came, who is over all God bleſſed for ever*; *That (d) being in the Form of God, he thought it no Robbery to be equal with God, and yet took upon him the Form of a Servant, and was made in the Likeneſs of Man*; and that, tho' he was the Son of God, *(e)* whom the Father *appointed Heir of all Things*, and by *whom alſo he made the Worlds*, he nevertheleſs took upon him *(f) the Seed of Abraham, and became (g) obedient unto Death, even the Death of the Croſs*; we cannot but perceive, that here are manifeſtly two different Natures, the *divine* and *human*, both conjoin'd in one Perſon.

Conſonant to Scripture.

IN the Prophet *Iſaiah*, our Saviour is called *Emmanuel*, or *God with us*, which, upon his Aſſumption of our Humanity, was verified; but in what Senſe can this be true, if there were not a *perſonal* Union of the two Natures? For, if the Natures were *divided*, Chriſt can be no more ſaid to be *God with us* upon his *Incarnation*, than he was at any Time before. In the firſt Epiſtle to the *Corinthians*, it is ſaid of Chriſt, (in Contradiſtinction to the *firſt Adam*, who was *from the Earth*) that he *is the Lord from Heaven*, which can bear no other Conſtruction, than this, —— that, the ſame Perſon, who, by taking our Fleſh in the Womb of a *Virgin*, became as truly a Man, as *Adam* was, was alſo as truly *the*

(a) John i. 31. (b) 1 Tim. iii. 16. (c) Rom. ix. 5. (d) Phil. ii. 6, 7. (e) Heb. i. 2. (f) Heb. ii. 16 (g) Phil. ii. 8.

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Lord from Heaven in the Nature, wherewith he was inveſted before he became the *Second Adam*. In the Teſtimony of *John* the Baptiſt, *after me cometh a Man, that is preferr'd before me, for he was before me*, there is a plain Reference to our Saviour Chriſt; and yet of him it is affirm'd, that he *came after the Baptiſt*, which can only be underſtood of his *Birth*, for, in another Reſpect, he *was before him*, viz. in the *eternal Exiſtence* of his Godhead; and thus the Explication becomes obvious: —The *Divinity* in our Lord's Perſon was *antecedent* to the *Baptiſt*, and, upon that Account, he *was before* him, and the *Humanity* in his Perſon was *later* than the *Baptiſt*, and ſo he was a Man that came *after him*.

THE like Argument may be drawn from thoſe *Paſſages*, which aſcribe ſuch Names and Actions to one and the ſame Perſon, as muſt neceſſarily proceed from two *diſtinct* Natures. Thus, when the very ſame Perſon is called the *Son of God*, and the *Son of Man*; is ſaid to have been *born*, and to be *from Everlaſting*; to *die*, and to *have Life in himſelf*; to be *on Earth*, and *in Heaven* at the ſame Time; 'tis plain, that two *different* Natures are referr'd to, both join'd together in a *perſonal* Union. St. *Paul* affirms, That (*a*) *God purchas'd a Church by his Blood*; that (*b*) *the* Jews *crucified the Lord of Glory*; and St. *John* avers, That (*c*) *God laid down his Life for us*; but now, if there be any *Truth* in theſe Aſſertions, it muſt follow, that one and the ſame Perſon was *God*, who *purchas'd the Church*, and likewiſe *Man*, becauſe he purchas'd it *by his Blood*; that the ſame Perſon, who *was crucified*, becauſe crucified, was truly *Man*, and yet as truly *God*, becauſe *the Lord of Glory*; and that he, who *laid down his Life for us*, was in all reſpects *God*, but nevertheleſs he muſt *be Man*, or otherwiſe he could *not lay down his Life*: (*d*) *No Man taketh away my Life from me*, ſaith he, *but I lay it down of myſelf*; *I have Power to lay it down, and I have Power to take it up again*; to *lay it down* as *Man*, and to *take it* again as *God*.

THUS does the Word of God afford us ſufficient Grounds to believe the *perſonal* Union of the divine and human Nature in Chriſt: Let us, in the next Place, ſee how far we can accommodate it to our *Reaſon*.

Not repugnant to Reaſon.

(*e*) THAT, when the Son of God became Man, he did not ceaſe to be what he was before, but, aſſuming the perfect Nature of Man, from thence-forward ſubſiſted in the *human*, who before ſubſiſted only in the divine Nature; that, in this *Aſſumption*, the *Manhood* was not ſwallow'd *up* of the Godhead, nor the *Godhead* tranſmuted into the Manhood; or, in other Words, the Manhood did not *ſubject* the Divinity to the *Infirmities* of the Fleſh, nor the Godhead *exalt* the Humanity into the divine *Perfections*; but the Properties of each Nature remained *diſtinct*, and acted agreeably to their own *Character*; that this Union of the two Natures was made without *Converſion* of one Nature into another, (becauſe God, who is the moſt *ſimple* and immutable Being, cannot be changed into any Thing elſe) and without * *Confuſion*, or mixing them both into one, which would have produc'd a *third* Nature different from both, and ſo made our Lord neither *perfect God* nor *perfect Man*; that, in vertue of this Union, the two Natures in Chriſt are ſo inſeparably join'd together, as never to be *divided*, and yet conſtitute † but one proper *individual Perſon*, (*f*) becauſe, as the Son of God was a *Perſon* before his Incarnation, he did not acquire *another* Perſon by being incarnate, but

(*a*) Acts xx. 28. (*b*) 1 Cor. ii. 8. (*c*) 1 John iii. 16. (*d*) John x. 18. (*e*) *Stephens*'s of the Union of the two Natures in Chriſt.

* The *Eutychians* were of a contrary Opinion. *Two* diſtinct Natures they acknowledge before their *Union*; but after their Union, they allow'd but of *one*. When this Union was made they were not agreed, whether at his Conception, Reſurrection, or Aſcenſion; but whenever it was, they were clearly of Opinion, that the *human* Nature was ſo totally *abſorb'd* into the *Divine*, as to be no more; and thence-forward there was only one, *i. e.* the divine Nature remaining: Which *Hereſy* was condemn'd by the *fourth* general *Council*, which aſſembled at *Calecdon* in the Year 451. *Pearſon* in his Notes, and *Wheatley* on the Creeds.

† The *Neſtorians* admitted of *two Natures*, the Divine and Human, in Chriſt; but then they aſſerted *two Perſons* likewiſe, the *one*, the only begotten of God, the *other*, the Son of the Virgin *Mary*: For they would by no Means allow, that the divine and human Nature were *perſonally* united, but only that the Word dwelt in Chriſt, much in the ſame Manner, as the *Holy Ghoſt* did in the *Prophets* and *Apoſtles*. So that Chriſt, in this Senſe, was no more than a Man, bearing God within him; and conſequently, that *Mary*, though the Mother of Chriſt, could no otherwiſe be called *the Mother of God*, than *Elizabeth* could be called the Mother of the *Holy Ghoſt*, with whom *John* the *Baptiſt* was *fill'd even from her Womb*, Luke i. 15. And this *Hereſy* was condemn'd by the *third* general *Council*, which aſſembled at *Epheſus* in the Year 431. *Wheatley* on the Creeds.

(*f*) *Jenkin*'s Reaſon. of the Chriſt. Relig. Vol. II.

but only aſſum'd human Nature (which of itſelf had no *diſtinct Subſiſtance*) into the *Perſonality* of the Godhead. This is the Sum and Subſtance of the *Doctrine* we profeſs: (*a*) And wherein does it appear to be repugnant to right *Reaſon?*

DID we indeed aſſert a *Converſion* of the Godhead into *Man*, or of the Manhood into *God*, this would imply ſuch a *Change*, as would involve in it a plain *Contradiction*. Did we ſuppoſe a *Confuſion* of Subſtance, this would infer ſuch a *Mixture* of both Natures, as is inconceivable; *Matter* and *Spirit*, *mortal* and *immortal*, *Creature* and *Creator*, would, by this Means, be jumbled together: Or did we maintain *two Perſons* in Chriſt, his two Natures then would not be ſo *phyſically* united, that the *Properties* of the one might be attributed to the other, as we find they are in Scripture. But when we only ſay, that the Son of God (from all Eternity a *Perſon*) did aſſume to himſelf that human Nature, * which had never been a Perſon; and ſo take Care, neither, by the *Unity* of the Perſon, to *confound* the Diſtinction of the Natures, nor, by the *Diſtinction* of the Natures, to *deſtroy* the Unity of the Perſon, where is the *Abſurdity*, nay where is the *Impropriety* of all this? Is not the Being, which we confeſs *Almighty*, able to take to himſelf any *Mode* of *Exiſtence*, that his divine Wiſdom thinks fit? And, if he makes Choice of *Humanity*, may not this human Nature, taken to the Divine, make as truly one *Perſon*, as the *immaterial* Soul and *fleſhly* Body conſtitute one Man?

Proved from the Union of our Soul *and* Body.

(*b*) SUPPOSE the Spirits of Men in a State of *Separation*; and that God ſhould reveal to them his Intention of placing them in a *lower* World, and, in order to that, of cloathing them with *groſs* and ſenſible Matter, wherein they ſhould act in *concert* with fleſhly *Organs*, and have a continual *Dependence* on them; would not this ſeem very ſtrange? And might not ſome *Spirit*, pretending to a *Superiority* of Reaſoning, conclude immediately, that the *Thing* was *unphiloſophical* and abſurd; that Body and Spirit were Beings ſo totally different, that they could no Ways meet together, and compoſe one entire *Subject*, and ſo reject the Revelation? In like manner, had we not Experience of the Union of our Soul and Body, we ſhould think it as difficult to conceive, and as hard to believe, as ſome may imagine this wonderful *Connexion* of the divine and human Nature. The Soul and Body are two *diſtinct* Subſtances, very different in kind, in Properties, and Dignity; the one in itſelf material, diviſible, corruptible, and devoid of Senſe; the other immaterial, indiviſible, incorruptible, and endued with Life, with Reaſon, with Cogitation, *&c.* and, yet, theſe two compoſe but one *Perſon*, and, ſtill retaining their own proper *Qualities*, and acting by their own diſtinct Faculties, they ſubſiſt without any *Confuſion* or *Tranſmutation*, without either being changed into one another, or being ſwallowed up of one another. The Compariſon indeed falls infinitely ſhort of the tranſcendent *Myſtery*, it is deſign'd to illuſtrate: But ſtill it demonſtrates thus much, — that there is no Improbability in ſuch an Union, as we plead for; that the Godhead and Manhood of Chriſt may as truly and properly be united, as are the two diſtinct *Ingredients* of Man, his Soul and his Body; or, in other Words, that as the Soul and Body are united in one Man, and yet retain their diſtinct *Natures* and *Properties*, ſo may we conceive the divine and human Nature in Chriſt to be united into one Perſon, and this without any *Change* or *Commixture* of the two Natures.

And the Reaſons why theſe two Natures ſhould meet *in Chriſt.*

Now if this Union of two different Natures in one and the ſame Perſon implies no *Contradiction*, but is what every Day we experience

(*a*) *Stanhope*'s Ser. at *Boyle*'s Lect.

* The Manner of this *Aſſumption* we find the learned and judicious *Hooker* thus endeavouring to illuſtrate. "The Seeds of Herbs and Plants, at firſt, *ſays he*, are not in *Act*, but in *Poſſibility* that which they afterwards "grow to be. If the Son of God had taken to himſelf a *Man* now made, and already perfected, it would "of Neceſſity follow, that there are in Chriſt *two Perſons*, the one *aſſuming*, and the other *aſſumed*; whereas "the Son of God did not aſſume a *Man's Perſon* into his own, but Man's *Nature* to his own Perſon; and "therefore took *Semen*, the *Seed of Abraham*, the very firſt *original Element* of our Nature, before it came to "have any *perſonal* human Subſiſtence. The *Fleſh*, and the *Conjunction* of the Fleſh with God, began both at "one *Inſtant*; his making, and taking to himſelf our Fleſh, was but *one Act*, ſo that in Chriſt there is no "*perſonal* Subſiſtence but one, and that from everlaſting. By taking only the *Nature* of Man, he ſtill con- "tinueth one *Perſon*, and changeth but the *Manner* of his ſubſiſting, which was before in the mere *Glory* of "the Son of God, and is now in the *Habit* of our Fleſh. Eccleſ. Polity, Lib. 5.

(*b*) *Atterbury*'s Ser. Vol. III.

experience in our own *Compoſition*, there are ſundry Reaſons ſuggeſted in holy Scripture, why the like Union of the divine and humanNature ſhould be ſuppoſed in the Perſon of our Saviour Chriſt. For, that our Saviour ſhould be the *Son of God* 'twas highly requiſite, (*a*) that, by the Nearneſs of his *Relation*, the Dignity of his *Perſon*, and the Greatneſs of his *Merit*, he might *conciliate* God's Favour to us, *appeaſe* his Wrath incenſed againſt us, and *ſatisfy* his Juſtice abuſed by our Offences; that the Value of the *Sacrifice*, he made of himſelf in the Fleſh, might become an *Atonement* ſufficient for the Sins of the whole World; his *Doctrine* be recommended by the higheſt *Authority*, and his *Example* prove a *perfect* Pattern of all Virtue and Godlineſs of Living; that, on our Behalf, he might be able to vanquiſh *Satan*, and all the Powers of Hell; erect a *ſpiritual* Kingdom in our Hearts; and, by an Inſtance of *infinite* Love and Condeſcenſion to us, engage our Love and warmeſt Affections towards him: And, in like manner, that our Lord ſhould be the *Son of Man*, it was no leſs expedient, that, in the ſame *Nature*, which committed our Offences, they might meet with a *Reparation*, and, in the *ſecond Adam*, our ſpiritual Enemy, who had ſhamefully vanquiſhed the *firſt*, might receive a compleat *Defeat*; that he might be a (*b*) *merciful and faithful High-Prieſt in Things pertaining to God*; qualified to be an *Interceſſor* with him for Man, whoſe Needs and Infirmities he had experienced; to be a *Revealer* of the divine Will in a more *eaſy* and *familiar* Manner, than otherwiſe he could have been; the *Judge* of all Mankind, in that he knows how to make favourable Allowances for our Failings; and the great *Mediator* between *God and Man*, in as much as, by partaking of the Nature of *both*, he can equally conſult the Honour of God, *and make Reconciliation for the Sins of the People*.

THESE are ſome of the Reaſons, which God has hinted to us in Scripture, why his infinite Wiſdom was pleaſed to pitch upon this, rather than any other Way of reconciling Man to himſelf: But, after all, we muſt acknowledge, that the *Incarnation* is an *Abyſs* of Mercy, which neither we, nor Angels are able to pry into; and therefore our proper Reſentment muſt be, to adore what we cannot approach, and (*c*) *to bow our Knees unto the Father of our Lord* Jeſus Chriſt, *that he would grant unto us, according to the Riches of his Glory, to be ſtrengthened with Might by his Spirit in the inward Man; that we may be able to comprehend, with all the Saints, what is Breadth, and Length, and Depth, and Height*, (in this Inſtance of his Incarnation eſpecially) *of the Love of Chriſt, which paſſeth all Knowledge*.

(*a*) *Barrow* on the Creed, (*b*) Heb. ii. 17. (*c*) Eph. iii. 14, &c.

SECT.

SECT II. Born of the Virgin Mary.

The EXPOSITION.

What we are to learn by the Name Mary.

MARY was a common Name among the *Jews*, and, * as it had nothing particular in its Signification, the Character of *the Virgin* is annexed to it to diſtinguiſh the Mother of our Lord from any other Woman of the like Nomination. In the Book of *(a) Exodus* indeed we read of one *Miriam* (which is the ſame with *Mary)* a Perſon of great Power and Authority among the *Iſraelites*, and to whom the conducting of the People out of *Egypt* is attributed, as well as to her Brothers; for thus ſaith the Lord, *(b) I brought thee out of the Land of Egypt, and redeemed thee out of the Houſe of Servants, and I ſent before thee* Moſes, *and* Aaron, *and* Miriam: And from hence ſome have thought her an eminent *Type* of the bleſſed Virgin, whom God made uſe of as an Inſtrument to bring about a much more glorious *Redemption* for us, an Eſcape from the Dominion of Sin, and Captivity of *Satan*, whereof the *Egyptian* Bondage was but an *Emblem*. However this be, from the *Analogy* of her Name we are led to obſerve, with the *Apoſtle*, that, when *(c) God ſent forth his Son, he was born of a Woman*, and *(d) took not on him the Nature of Angels, but the Seed of* Abraham, *that in all Things he might be made like unto his Brethren.* (*e*) God no doubt, had he been ſo minded, could have created a *diſtinct Nature*, of the like *Ingredients* and *Compoſition* with ours, and then have aſſumed it; but, to anſwer the Purpoſe of his redeeming us, it was requiſite, that there ſhould be not only a Similitude in *Make* and *Properties*, but a *Cognation* likewiſe, and *Proximity* of Blood between us and our Redeemer. For, ſince our whole Blood was *tainted*, and our Dignity forfeited by the *Rebellion* and *Diſloyalty* of our firſt *Anceſtor*, it was highly proper that it ſhould be *purg'd*, and reſtored by the *Merit* and *Fidelity* of a Perſon, who was of our *Race* and Kindred; and, as our Title was *extinct* by the Tranſgreſſion of *one*, that it ſhould be *revived* again, and the Buſineſs of our *Adoption* into the *celeſtial* Family tranſacted by *another* common *Relation*.

Her Nature.

Her Sex.

ST. *PAUL*, to enforce the Duty of *Subjection* in Women, makes it an Argument, that *(f)* Adam *was not deceived, but the Woman, being deceived, was in the Tranſgreſſion*; and therefore to retrieve the Honour of the *Sex*, and that Man might no longer have it in his Power to *upbraid* them with the Calamities brought upon human Nature, it was expedient, that, what gave Occaſion to our *Fall*, ſhould be the Means of our *Reſtoration*; that, as in the *firſt Eve all die*, ſo in the *ſecond Eve* (if I may be allowed to ſpeak with (*g*) the Apoſtle) *ſhould all be made alive*. Here then is an ample Amends made. The *Odium*, which the *firſt* incurr'd, and the Damage, ſhe brought to Mankind by her Tranſgreſſion, the *ſecond* has quite removed and repaired, inſomuch that, ſince the Incarnation of the Son of God, all *Generations* have abundant Reaſon to call the whole Sex *bleſſed*.

Her Condition.

ANOTHER Obſervation ariſing from the Virgin's Name, is this, — That, as there are no pompous *Titles*, or ſplendid *Epithets* attending it (plain *Mary* is all that ſhe is called) ſo was her outward Condition in this Life very mean; (*h*) ſo mean, that ſhe could arrive to no higher Fortune, than to be the *eſpouſed* Wife of a poor *Carpenter*; ſo poor, that, at her Child-Birth, ſhe was not able to procure a Room (even in her greateſt Neceſſity) in the *Inn*, where ſhe was a Gueſt, but lay in the *Straw*, and was brought to Bed in a *Stable*, and that in a *Cave* under Ground, as the ancient Tradition goes;

* Several Fathers, and other learned Men of Diſtinction in the Church, have diſcovered, or rather have endeavoured to diſcover particular Reaſons, for appropriating this *Name* more eſpecially to the bleſſed *Virgin*, from the natural Signification of it. But there is ſo much *Scope* for Conjecture in deriving the *Origin* of Names, that ſmall Account is to be made of any Eſſays of this Kind. Thoſe however, who have a Taſte for ſuch curious *Entertainments*, may conſult Bp *Pearſon*, in his *marginal* Notes, upon the Name *Mary*; though it may be proper for them to obſerve this Caution; — that, what the good Fathers have ſaid concerning the *Etymology* of the Word *Mary*, is to be underſtood chiefly by way of *Accommodation*, or ſome *moral* Improvement, that may be drawn from it. *Fiddes*'s Body, Vol. I.

(*a*) Ch. xv. 20. (*b*) Micah vi. 4. (*c*) Gal. iv. 4. (*d*) Heb. ii. 16, 17. (*e*) *Barrow* on the Creed, Vol II. (*f*) Tim. ii. 14. (*g*) 1 Cor. v. 45. (*h*) *Bull*'s Ser. Vol. I.

goes; ſo low, that, at her *Purification*, her Purſe could not reach higher, than the cheapeſt *Offering* preſcribed by the Law, *(a) a Pair of Turtle Doves, or two young Pigeons*; and laſtly, ſo deſtitute, that her bleſſed Son, (*b*) when upon the Croſs, and at the Point of Death, thought it not unneceſſary to *recommend* her to the *charitable* Care of his beloved Apoſtle. Such was *the low Eſtate of this bleſſed Handmaiden*, whom the great Creator and Ruler of the Univerſe thought proper to *regard*. To teach us the Vanity of the outward Pomps and Appearances of the World, he did not chuſe, for the Mother of his Son, and Saviour of Mankind, (*c*) any great *Princeſs*, any honourable or wealthy *Perſonage*; but a *poor* Woman, eſpouſed to a *mean* Artiſan, rich only in Grace, and (*d*) *the Ornament of a meek and quiet Spirit*, (which, in the Sight of God, is of great Price) thereby inſtructing us, that innocent and virtuous *Poverty* is conſiſtent with the trueſt *Felicity*, and that our real *Glory* and Greatneſs is not the *Garb* and *Retinue*, that ſurround us, but that *inward* Virtue and Goodneſs, which tranſform us into the *Image* of God, and make him love us.

Her Family. THERE is one Obſervation more to be made of the Name of *Mary*, as ſhe was the Mother of our Saviour Chriſt, and that is, —— the *Lineage*, from whence ſhe deſcended, *being of the Houſe of* David, *and of the Tribe of* Judah: For, though it may be ſuppoſed a Thing ſufficient to denominate him *the Son of* David, that *Joſeph*, his reputed Father, and eſpouſed to his Mother, was of that Houſe; yet, ſince God was pleaſed (*e*) *to promiſe* David, that *the Fruit of his Loins ſhould ſit upon his Throne*, it was neceſſary that Chriſt, who was the Subject of this Promiſe, ſhould, according to the natural Conſtruction of it, deduce his Line from him, not by a *legitimated*, but by a proper *Deſcent*; and ſince the Author to the *(f) Hebrews* affirms, as a Matter evident beyond all Contradiction, that our Lord *ſprang out of* Judah, this is a Warrant ſufficient for concluding, that his Mother was of the ſame *Tribe*. And to this Purpoſe we may obſerve, that where it is ſaid, that *(g) the Angel* Gabriel *was ſent by God to a Virgin* (eſpouſed to a Man, whoſe Name was *Joſeph) of the Houſe of* David, *and the Virgin's Name was* Mary, (*h*) the rendring ſhould rather be, *to a Virgin of the Houſe of* David, *eſpouſed to a Man, whoſe Name was* Joſeph, *and the Virgin's Name was* Mary; for ſince *Jeſus* was not the the Son of *David* in reſpect of *Joſeph*, or any other Man, from whom he received *nothing*, nor in reſpect of the *Holy Ghoſt*, from whom he received only the *Form*, he muſt have been *ſo*, in reſpect of his Mother *Mary*, (*i*) becauſe of her proper *Subſtance* he received the *Materials* of his human Nature: And for this Reaſon it is, that *ſhe*, as well as *Joſeph*, in Obedience to the *Roman* Emperor, (who commanded all, both Men and Women, to be enroll'd in the Cities of the ſeveral Houſes, from whence they ſprung) went up to *Bethlehem the City of* David, there to be enroll'd, becauſe ſhe was of his Houſe and Lineage, otherwiſe (as *Grotius* obſerves) ſhe ought to have been enroll'd in the City of her own Family, and not in *Bethlehem*. Thus the Name of *Mary* has led us into the Knowledge of her Nature, *Sex*, her *Condition*, and her *Family*; and we come now to make ſome Obſervations upon her pure and immaculate *Virginity*.

Her Virginity. THAT the *Meſſias*, whenever he came into the World, was to be produced in a manner wholly *miraculous*, by Means of a Woman *only*, without the Help or Concurrence of Man, this ſeems to be implied in the very *firſt* Prophecy, that *(k) the Seed of the Woman ſhall bruiſe the Serpent's Head*; for ſince *Adam*, the great *Progenitor* of Mankind, had loſt himſelf and his Poſterity, and yet is not once *mention'd* in the *Promiſe*, which is intirely made to the *Woman* and her *Seed only*, God was willing to have it underſtood, that our *Redeemer* was to be born of a *Virgin Mother*, at the Time when he made this *Declaration*. This ſeems to be intimated in the Paſſage of a (*l*) *Virgin's compaſſing a Man*, which, from the *Solemnity* of the Preface, that introduces it, and the *Strangeneſs* of an Event here call'd the *Lord's creating a new Thing upon Earth*, cannot well be applied to any other Purpoſe. But this is ſtill more fully and plainly expreſſed in that Prediction of *Iſaiah*, (*m*) *Behold a Virgin ſhall conceive and bear a Son*;

(*a*) Luke ii. 22. and Lev. xii. 6, &c. (*b*) John xix. 25, &c. (*c*) *Barrow* on the Creed, Vol. II. (*d*) 1 Pet. iii. 3. (*e*) Acts ii. 30. (*f*) Heb. vii. 15. (*g*) Luke i. 26, 27. (*h*) *Whitby's* Annot. in Locum. (*i*) *Stanhope's* Epiſt. and Goſp. Vol. I. (*k*) Gen. iii. 15. (*l*) Jer. xxxi. 22. (*m*) Iſa. vii. 14.

Son; for, allowing the Spirit of God to be a good *Interpreter* of his own Meaning, what he foretold by the *Mouth* of his *Prophet*, by the *Pen* of his (*a*) *Evangeliſt* we find him applying to the bleſſed Virgin. A Virgin ſhe was, after her Eſpouſal to *Joſeph*, as appears by (*b*) the Narration of St. *Luke*, and after the Salutation of the *Arch-Angel*, (*c*) as her Queſtion to him does import. A Virgin ſhe continued to be after her *Conception* by the Holy Ghoſt, during her Pregnancy and her Parturition, as appears from the Application of the Prophecy, (*d*) *A Virgin ſhall conceive and bring forth a Son*; and, (*e*) in regard to the peculiar *Eminence* of this *Virgin Mother*, the ſpecial Honour due to her Son, the *Sanctity* of the Holy Ghoſt that over-ſhadowed her, and the ſingular Goodneſs and Piety of *Joſeph*, who had eſpouſed her, the Church has generally believed (tho' not as an *Article* neceſſary to Salvation) that ſhe continued in the ſame Virginity ever afterwards. (*f*) For it cannot, with Decency, be imagined, that the moſt holy *Veſſel*, which was thus once conſecrated to be a Receptacle of the Deity, ſhould afterwards be deſecrated, and profaned by vulgar Uſe.

Reaſons for that and Joſeph's cohabiting with her.

HOWEVER this be, the *Purity* of our Saviour's human Nature, which was to be without Sin, without Contamination, and therefore not to ſpring from any *ſeminal Traduction*, the *Dignity* of his Perſon, who, having pre-exiſted in the *Form of God*, was to make his Entrance into the World in ſuch a wonderful Manner, as might procure Reverence and Admiration, and the *Manifeſtation* of his divine Original, or that he might appear to be both God and Man; Man, as born of *Woman*, and God, as born of a *Virgin*, made it highly requiſite, that, at leaſt, in his Conception, and Birth, his Mother ſhould be *immaculate*, and free from all Pollution. *Joſeph*, by the Information of a Meſſenger from Heaven, was fully ſatisfied of this; and therefore his *marrying* and cohabiting with her was to *protect* her *Character* from the *Suſpicion*, and *Scandal* of the World; was to *defend* her Son from the Imputation of *Illegitimacy*; was to make him, as his neareſt Relation, his own Son by *Adoption*; was to receive him, in virtue of that *Proximity* of Blood, for his immediate and rightful *Heir*; was to be aſſiſtant to his Mother's (*g*) Care and Tenderneſs of his *Infancy*, to guard his helpleſs *Childhood*, to provide for his conſtant *Maintenance*, to breed him up in ſuch a Manner and Occupation, as his poor Circumſtances would allow; and, if Occaſion were, to teſtify to the World, that an *Angel* from Heaven had, more than once, revealed it to him, that ſhe, who paſſed for his *Wife*, as being *betroth'd* to him, was *ſtill* a Virgin, had no Communion with Man though ſhe had a Child, but was *impregnated* by the Holy Ghoſt.

Though a Virgin, yet was ſhe properly a Mother.

A Child indeed ſhe had in the moſt *ſtrict* and literal Senſe. Him (*h*) *ſhe conceived in her Womb*, according to the Angel's Annunciation: Him ſhe *increaſed* and *nouriſhed*, by a Communication of her own *Subſtance*: Him ſhe *bore about* in her Body, the *uſual* Time of other Mothers, and, (*i*) *when the Days were accompliſh'd that ſhe ſhould be delivered*, (what is the laſt Circumſtance to make good the Title of a Mother) (*k*) *ſhe brought forth her Firſt-born Son, and called his Name* Jeſus: So that *Jeſus*, who was *conceived* in *Mary*'s Womb, who *grew* there in proportion to other Children, who *ſtayed* there the full Time of other Births, who, during that Time, was *nouriſhed* there, as others are ſtill ripe for Birth, and who, at the End of that Time, was *born* after the Manner of common Infants, was truly and really her Son. This is the whole Progreſs of human Generation: And therefore, in Regard of him, *Mary* was as perfectly a Mother, as any other Woman can be of any other Child whatever. Nay, there is ſome Reaſon to ſay, that ſhe was more ſtrictly and properly a *Mother*, than any other Woman can be. For, whereas in the uſual Courſe of Nature, Children partake in the Subſtance of *both* Parents, the whole of Chriſt's human Subſtance was derived from her alone, and therefore by the *Evangeliſt* ſhe is frequently ſtiled *the Mother of* Jeſus, by *Elizabeth*, particularly, the *Mother of our Lord*, and, by the * general Conſent of the Church, *the Mother of God*: " For, if the

(*a*) Matt. i. 23. (*b*) Luke. i. 27. (*c*) Luke i. 34. (*d*) Matt. i. 34. (*e*) *Pearſon* on the Creed. (*f*) Bp *Bull*'s Ser. Vol. I. (*g*) *Jenkins*'s Reaſon. Vol. I. (*h*) Luke i. 31. (*i*) Luke ii. 6. (*k*) Matt i. 25.

* In the *third* general *Council* of *Epheſus*, which was convened in Oppoſition to the Hereſy of *Neſtorius*, who denied this *Title* to the bleſſed Virgin, it was confirm'd to her. The Council did not invent it, but only ratified what had been uſed a long while before. A whole Age indeed before this Council, we find *Euſebius* expreſly giving

" the Mother of *Peter* (as (*a*) one argues) " might properly be call'd the Mother of " him, as *Man*, (and as Man *principally* " imports an *intelligent* Being) though ſhe " contributed nothing towards the Gene- " ration of his *intellectual* Part; ſo the " Perſon, whoſe Mother the *holy Virgin* " was, being expreſly ſtiled *God*, and ha- " ving every divine Perfection aſcribed to " him, ſhe may, for the ſame Reaſon, " and with the ſame Propriety, with Re- " ſpect to the *perſonal* Union of the divine " and human Nature, be ſtiled, and con- " ſidered as the *Mother of God*."

WHETHER the bleſſed Virgin, ſo highly favoured by God, was exempted from * *original Sin*, or ſanctified from her Mother's Womb; whether ſhe ſuffered in any Part of her *Virginity*, or was ſenſible of any Pain in the Time of her *Parturition*, are Speculations of ſo nice a Nature, that we chuſe to decline them, and had rather conclude with an Obſervation or two concerning the *Time*, the *Place*, and ſome other Circumſtances, attending our Lord's *Nativity*.

The Time.

To account for the *Time*, when our bleſſed Saviour was born, the *Evangeliſt* informs us, that (*b*) *in thoſe Days there went out a Decree from* Cæſar Auguſtus, that all the World, *i. e.* all the *Roman* Empire, *ſhould be taxed*, or ſhould be *ſurveyed*, and have their Names and Conditions of Life ſet down in *Court-Rolls*, that thereby he might know (as (*c*) the *Hiſtorian* tells us) the Strength and Number of his Subjects; but that this could not be done ſo commodiouſly, unleſs every one repaired to the City, to which his Family did belong. This Survey and Enrollment, we are told, were intended by *Auguſtus* to have been put in Execution *ſooner*, but, by the Intervention of ſome other Affairs, they were deferred, or at leaſt did not reach † *Judæa* until the Year, when the Temple of ‡ *Janus* was ſhut up at *Rome*, and an *univerſal* Peace prevailing, and continuing for twelve Years over all the Empire, made it a moſt agreeable Time for the Birth of him, who being ſtiled by the Prophet the *Prince* of *Peace*, proclaimed Peace to all the *Earth* at the Hour of his Birth, and left it to his

giving this Title to the ſacred Virgin in his third Book of the Life of *Conſtantine*, Chap. 43. and *Socrates*, a moſt credible Witneſs in this Matter, in the ſeventh Book of his *eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory*, Chap. 32. aſſures us, that *Origen*, long before *Euſebius*, largely explained, and aſſerted the Title, as applied to the bleſſed Virgin. *Iræneus* ſeems to be of the ſame Sentiment, Lib. 5. Chap. 19. where he ſays, that the Angel declared to her, that ſhe ſhould *bear God within her*, for if ſhe bore him, ſhe brought him forth too, and then ſhe was truly *the Mother of God*. Nor was the bleſſed *Martyr*, and Diſciple of the Apoſtles, *Ignatius*, in his Epiſtle to the *Epheſians*, afraid to ſay, *that our God* Jeſus Chriſt *was conceived in the Womb of* Mary. Nay, before all theſe, *Iſaiah*'s Prophecy, Chap. vii. 14. and St. *Matthew* relate, Chap. i. 23. of the bleſſed Virgin, that *ſhe brought forth her firſt-born Son*, whoſe Name, according to the Prophet, was *Immanuel*, which being interpreted, ſays the *Evangeliſt*, *is God with us*. As truly therefore, as *Mary* brought forth, and was the *Mother of* Immanuel, *of God with us*, ſo truly was ſhe the *Mother of God*; and accordingly, *Elizabeth*, even when *fill'd with the Holy Ghoſt*, ſtiles and proclaims her, *the Mother of my Lord*, a Title, which, in its true and proper Senſe, can belong to Chriſt only *as God*. *Bull*'s Ser. Vol. I. and *Wheatley* on the Creeds.

(*a*) *Fiddes*'s Body, Vol. I.

* As to this Queſtion we find Dr. *Heylin*, in his Sum of *Chriſtian Theology*, thus expreſſing himſelf, " Tho' " I am loth to rob this moſt happy *Inſtrument* of our Redemption of any *Privilege* or Exemption, whatever " it be, which may conſiſt with the *Analogy* of Faith, and the Word of God; yet, when I find in holy Scripture " that *Chriſt came into the World to ſave Sinners*, 1 Tim. i. 15. and that the Virgin did *rejoice in God her Saviour*, " Luke i. 47. either I muſt conclude, that ſhe was a Sinner, or elſe that ſhe needed not a Saviour: And when " I read it in *Nicephorus*, that ſhe died in the *fifty-ninth Year* of her Age, and was attended to her Grave by " the *Apoſtles*, met together by a Miracle, I cannot but conclude her under the *Law of Sin*, or elſe ſhe had " not been ſubject to the *Stroke* of Death, which is the *Wages of Sin*, as St. *Paul* has told us, Rom. vi. 23.

(*b*) Luke ii. 1. (*c*) *Tacitus*'s Annal. Lib. 1.

† The *Decree*, for *ſurveying* and *regiſtring* all the People of the *Roman* Empire, was *iſſued* out *three Years* before our Saviour was born, but was not *executed* in *Judæa*, until the *very Time*; nor can this be any Wonder at all, becauſe, upon the Suppoſition that the Execution of it was committed to the Governor of every *Province*, as *Judæa* then belonged to the Province of *Syria*, to carry it through all the Countries thereunto belonging, *viz.* through *Syria*, *Cœlo-Syria*, *Phœnia*, and *Judæa*, three Years were no more than ſufficient. For, if *Joab* was nine Months and ten Days, in taking an Account only of the *ten Tribes of Iſrael*, and no more of them, than were Men fit for the Wars, we may well ſuppoſe, that the Account here taken by the Decree of *Auguſtus*, might employ the whole three Years, ſince it extended in all Manner of Perſons, and alſo to their Poſſeſſions, Eſtates, Qualities, and other Circumſtances. *Prideaux*'s Connect. Part 2. Lib. 9.

‡ The Uſage was to lay open the Gates in the Time of *War*, and to ſhut them up in Times of *Peace*. Since the firſt building of *Rome* they had been ſhut but *five Times*. The *firſt* was, in the Reign of *Numa*; the *ſecond*, after the End of the firſt *punick* War; the *third*, after *Auguſtus* had vanquiſhed *Anthony* and *Cleopatry*; the *fourth*, after the *Cantabrian* War in *Spain*, and the *fifth*, in the Year of our Saviour's Birth, and under the Reign of the ſame *Auguſtus*. *Prideaux*'s Connect. Part 2. Lib. 9.

his Diſciples as his laſt Legacy at the Time of his Death. A fearful Admonition this, to ſuch *Kings* and *Potentates*, called after his Name, as make War and Deſolation their Pride and Pleaſure, their Recreation and Delight!

The Place. (*a*) WHEN *Herod* demanded of the *chief Prieſts* and *Scribes* where Chriſt ſhould be born, their Anſwer was, in *Bethlehem*, for which they quote the Prophet *Micah* affirming, that though *(b)* it was * little among the *Thouſands*, or Cities of *Judah*, yet out of it *ſhould come forth a* † *Governor, who ſhould rule the People of* Iſrael, *whoſe Goings-forth, have been from of old, from everlaſting*. Here then we cannot ſufficiently admire the *Providence* of God, that the Child, which was conceived in *Nazareth*, a City of *Galilee*, ſhould, for the *Completion* of a Prophecy, and in Teſtimony of his being the true *Meſſias*, be born in *Bethlehem*, the *City of* David. Had it not been in Obedience to the Emperor's Decree, it is highly improbable, that *Joſeph* and *Mary* would have taken ſuch a Journey, in the Condition ſhe was in, and at ſo unſeaſonable a Time of the Year: But God, who can effect his Deſigns by what Inſtrument he pleaſes, ſo ordered the Matter, that, by the Command of an *heathen* Prince, they ſhould, at that Time, repair to *Bethlehem*, to the End that, not only the Accompliſhment of the Predictions, concerning his Son's Birth, might make it more *conſpicuous*, and remarkable, but that it might likewiſe be recorded in the *publick Acts* of the Empire, to which we find ſome primitive Writers, in their *Apologies* for the Truth of Chriſtianity, making frequent Appeals.

and other Circumſtances of our Saviour's Birth. OUR *Annotators* make it a common Obſervation, that, as *Abraham* and *David*, to whom the Promiſe of the *Meſſias* was firſt made, were *Shepherds*, ſo was the Completion of this Promiſe firſt revealed to Men of the like *Profeſſion*; only they were not *Owners* and Maſters of Flocks, who, in *Eaſtern* Countries, were Men of great *Ability*, but their *meaner* Servants, whoſe Buſineſs it was to watch, and keep Guard at Night, and had their little Huts or Cottages erected for that Purpoſe: And yet theſe poor laborious People God was pleaſed to honour with the firſt News of his Son's Arrival in the World, with the Communication of divine *Myſteries*, and the Apparition of his holy Angels, in order to teach us, that he is *no Reſpecter of Perſons*; that outward Pomp and Splendour, high Parentage, large Retinues, ample Fortunes, and ſtately Palaces, are of no Eſteem with him; and that, as his Son at this Birth preferr'd *Bethlehem* before *Jeruſalem*, a Stable before a *Preſence-Chamber*, and theſe poor Country *Swains* before *Herod* and all his *Courtiers*; ſo a plain honeſt *Simplicity* is what will chiefly recommend us to him, to whoſe Favour and Acceptance the *Obſcurity* of our *Parentage*, or the *Meanneſs* of our *Calling* or Occupation, is no manner of Let or Impediment.

BUT, how *humble* and condeſcenſive ſoever our Lord's *Nativity* might be in other Reſpects, we muſt obſerve, that there was a certain *Grandeur* and *Magnificence* attending it, which far excell'd the *Birth* of any earthly Prince; that upon this Occaſion, a *new Star*, or a *luminous* Body, *condens'd* into the Form and Figure of a Star, appeared to ‡ the *wiſe Men* in the *Eaſt*; *ſet*

(a) Matt. ii. 4. *(b)* Micah v. 2.

* There is ſome ſmall Variation between the *Prophet*, who calls it a *little Place*, and the *Evangeliſt*, who repreſents it as *not one of the leaſt*, i. e. a very conſiderable one, among the Princes or Cities of *Judah*; but this is eaſily reconciled, ſince the City might be little with reſpect to the *Extent* of it, or the Number of its Inhabitants, in *Micah*'s Senſe, and yet one of the *greateſt* in the Senſe of St. *Matthew*, becauſe it not only gave Birth to the Royal Houſe of *Judah*, but was now become more illuſtrious, than any other City, by having one, greater than King *David*, the Saviour of the World, and the Son of God, born in it. *Fiddes*'s Body, Vol. I. and *Twells*'s Ser. Vol. II.

† *Grotius* is of Opinion, that, in the *primary* Senſe of this Prophecy, the Governor here ſpoken of was *Zerubbabel*, but, beſides that *Zerubbabel* was not the Governor, born at *Bethlehem*, but at *Babylon*, as his Name imports, nor had he any Relation to the Place, except that diſtant one of being a very remote Deſcendant from *David*, who was born in that City near five Hundred Years before; he, of whom *Micah* ſpeaks, was to be a *Ruler of Iſrael*, whereas *Zerubbabel* never had the Power or Title of *one*. He indeed was no more, than one of the *Heads* of the *Captivity*; and, tho' he be firſt nam'd, out of Regard to his *Royal* Deſcent, yet is he never mentioned ſingly in any *Act* of Juriſdiction; nor do we hear any Thing more of him, than that he laid the *Foundation Stone* of the *ſecond Temple*, which, for that Reaſon, has frequently gone by his Name. *Twells*'s Ser. Vol. II.

‡ The Word *Magi* our *Tranſlators* have very properly rendered *wiſe Men*, or *Sages*, becauſe the other has generally a *bad* Meaning affix'd to it. The *Magi* of old were Men renowned for their great Knowledge of Things both *natural* and *divine*, but more eſpecially of *Aſtronomy*, inſomuch, that a *learned Man*, and a *Magian*, were

out with them, when they went in *queſt* of what it portended; *glided* all along the *Atmoſphere* before them; and, having conducted them firſt to *Jeruſalem*, and then to *Bethlehem*, *pointed* its Rays directly upon the Houſe, where the bleſſed Infant lay: That, upon the Sight of him, tho' lying but in a *Manger*, they fell down, and worſhipped him, and preſented him with ſuch *Gifts*, as declared their Opinion both of his *divine* and *human* Nature; with *Gold*, as an Enſign of his *regal* Power; with *Myrrh*, as being a *Man*, who was to *die*; and with *Frankincenſe*, becauſe he was a God: *That the Glory of the Lord*, or ſuch a bright and refulgent Cloud or Light, as appeared upon Mount *Sinai*, and is the uſual Manifeſtation of God's immediate *Preſence*, ſhone round the *Shepherds*: That an *heavenly Hoſt*, or a Multitude of Angels, thoſe glorious Attendants on the Throne of God, came down upon Earth to celebrate this *Nativity*; and that, as they (*a*) *ſung together*, at the *firſt Creation*, ſo did they now, at the Redemption of the World, in that ſublime and truly *evangelical Hymn*, (*b*) *Glory be to God on high, and in Earth Peace, Good-will towards Men*, which our pious Mother the *Church*, in the moſt *ſeraphick* Part of her *Communion Service*, and after the Reception of the bleſſed *Euchariſt*, rejoices greatly to repeat.

The OBJECTION.

" BUT, if the Birth of Chriſt was " of ſuch *beneficial* Effect to Mankind, why it was delay'd ſo long, or, " if it was brought about in ſo *miraculous* a " Manner, why there is no more Notice taken of it in the ſacred Writings, we cannot " ſo well imagine. Two of the *Evangeliſts* mention it indeed in their *Entrance* " upon our Lord's Hiſtory; but, as the " other two quite omit it, ſo *he himſelf* " in his own *Preaching*, and the *Apoſtles* " in their *Acts*, and ſeveral *Epiſtles*, never " once alledge it in Proof of his divine " *Commiſſion*; and yet one would think " it a convincing Argument, that a " Perſon, born ſo *ſupernaturally*, ſhould " immediately come from God. It was " highly requiſite however, for the *Completion* of ancient *Prophecies*, that he " ſhould deſcend from the Family of *David*, but this he could only do by his " *Mother's Side*; and yet we find the two " *Evangeliſts* chiefly employing themſelves " in giving us the Pedigree of *Joſeph*, " which is nothing at all to the Purpoſe; " and yet, in their *Genealogies* they ſeem to " differ ſo widely, that there is no Poſſibility of *reconciling* them, without the " Suppoſition of our Saviour's being the " Son of *Joſeph*, as we find (*c*) his Mother " herſelf declaring him to be his *Father*. " Upon this Preſumption, *we* cannot but " conceive, that the *Prophecies* commonly " urg'd to prove her *Virginity*, do not in- " tirely

were Terms equivalent. This however raiſed the Admiration of the *Vulgar* to ſuch a Degree, that they look'd upon them as inſpired by ſome *ſupernatural* Powers, and thence imagined them to be *Conjurors*: And as Conjurors indeed, or thoſe, that pretended to deal in *diabolical Arts*, were fond of the Name of *Magians*, it thence became a *Note of Infamy*, as it is among us; whereas the *true* and ancient *Magians* were the greateſt *Mathematicians*, *Philoſophers*, and *Divines*, in the Ages when they lived, and had no other Knowledge, but what they acquired by their own *Study*, and the Inſtructions of the Heads and Doctors of their *Sect*. Of this Sort were the *Sages*, who came from *Arabia*, as is ſuppos'd (becauſe it abounded with them, as the Learned obſerve, and lay to the *Eaſt* of *Judæa*) to pay their Homage to the new-born Saviour of the World. Their Number from the *triple* Offering, that they made, is ſuppoſed to be *three*. Their particular Names (as *Gaſpar*, *Baltazar*, and *Melchior*) are mention'd by ſome; their Ages ſpecified, (*viz.* that the *firſt* was *ſixty* Years old, the *ſecond* forty, and the *third* twenty, when they came to Chriſt) and their *Quality* remark'd, *viz.* that they were all *Kings*, becauſe, in the Office for *Epiphany*, that Paſſage in the *Pſalmiſt*, *the Kings of* Arabia *and* Saba *ſhall bring Gifts*, is wont to be applied to them. But this is all *conjectural*, or is founded, at beſt, but upon a very uncertain *Tradition*; only we may ſuppoſe, that, being great and *opulent* Men, they might, upon that Account, be ſtiled *Kings* in thoſe Times, according to the *ancient* Way of Speaking, as is evident from ſundry Places in Scripture. What became of theſe *wiſe Men* after their Departure from our Saviour, the ſacred Hiſtory gives us no Account; but, if we may give Credit to ſome *Eccleſiaſtical* Writers, upon their Return home they ſtill retained the ſame *Veneration* for the *Hebrew Child*, embraced his Religion, when it came to be publiſhed, and were baptized by *Thomas* the Apoſtle, when he travelled into *Arabia* to preach the Goſpel. From *Arabia*, about three Hundred Years after, by the expreſs Command of the Empreſs *Helena*, their Bodies were removed to *Conſtantinople*; from thence, by *Euſtathius*, to *Milan*; and thence, by *Renatus*, then Biſhop, to *Cologne*, where they now remain, and their *Monuments* are ſhewn to Strangers, under the Title of *the three Kings of* Cologne. *Prideaux*'s Connect. Vol. I and *Edwards*'s Body, Vol. I.

(*a*) Job xxvii. 7. (*b*) Luke ii. 14. (*c*) Luke ii. 42.

" tirely come up to the Point; that, what " concerns the *Seed of the Woman, and the* " *Serpent*, if it may not be taken in a " *literal* Senſe, may relate however to any " Son, deſcended from *Eve*, as we find " that ſhe, *(a)* upon the Birth of *Cain*, " underſtood it; that the *Woman's compaſ-* " *ſing a Man*, may be applied, either to " ſome *fond*, or ſome *robuſt* Creature of " the Sex, that ſhould either not be " aſhamed to *court*, or not afraid to *encounter* " and ſtrong enough to *overcome* a Man, " though this is allowed to be an uncom- " mon Caſe; and that the *Virgin, who* " *ſhould conceive, and bear a Son*, muſt " denote (as the *Word* will bear) any *young* " *Woman then unmarried:* For ſince ſhe " is made the *Sign* of a Deliverance, that " ſhould ſpeedily happen, ſhe could not " be intended to denote the *Virgin Mary*, " who was not in Being 'till ſome *hundred* " *Years* after. The Sign, which *Iſaiah* men- " tions, is given to the People then *living*, " and not to Generations *afar off*, becauſe we " cannot imagine, of what Uſe or Conſo- " lation could the future Birth of the *Meſ-* " *ſias* be to the Houſe of *David* in their " preſent Diſtreſs, or where the Senſe is " of the Prophet's ſaying, *(b) that before the* " *Child* (to be born *ſeven hundred Years* " hence) *ſhall be able to diſtinguiſh between* " *Good and Evil, the Land ſhall be forſaken* " *of both her Kings?* So that it muſt be in " ſome other Woman, and not in *Mary* the " bleſſed Mother of *Jeſus*, that this Prophe- " cy had its Accompliſhment. Nay, after " the Birth of her Son, had the Mother " ſtill continued a *Virgin*, why ſhould we " hear of *(c) the Days of her Purification* " *according to the Law of* Moſes, and, " after their Accompliſhment, of her taking " a Journey to *Jeruſalem*, (had ſhe been " free from all Pollution) to offer a *Sa-* " *crifice*, and that *(d) the Prieſt might* " *make an Atonement, and ſhe become clean?* " Why ſhould we hear of our Lord's *Bre-* " *thren*, in Company with his Mother, " and find their very Names expreſſed, " *(e) James*, and *Joſes*, and *Simon*, and " *Judas?* And why does the *Evangeliſt* " inform us, that *(f) Joſeph knew not his* " *Wife, until ſhe had brought forth her* " *firſt-born Son*, which, in the literal and " moſt obvious Senſe of the Words, ſeems " to import, that from that Time he knew " her, or had *matrimonial* Communion with " her, and from that Communion had " other Children, beſides her *Firſt-born?* " Upon the Whole therefore we may con- " clude, that the *Mary*, mentioned in the " Goſpel, though Mother of an *excellent* " Perſon, was not *exempted* from the com- " mon *Fate* and Condition of other Wo- " men in the like Circumſtances; that " her *perpetual Virginity* is a mere *Fiction* " of her *fond* Admirers; and that, neither " upon *this*, nor any other Account, does " ſhe deſerve the Praiſes and Commen- " dations, the Titles and Encomiums, the " Addreſſes and ſolemn Invocations, that " ſome of her blind and bigotted *Votaries* " are known to give her."

Anſwered, by ſhewing the Impertinence *of aſking why Chriſt's* Birth *was* delay'd.

(g) THIS is a faithful Saying, ſaith St. *Paul, and worthy of all that Acceptation, that Chriſt Jeſus came into the World to ſave Sinners:* But if the Deſign of his Coming was ſo *gracious*, to demand a *Reaſon*, why he was born no *ſooner*, or why God ſuf- fered *four thouſand Years* to interfere be- tween the *Creation* of the World, and his Son's *Nativity*, is a Queſtion much of the ſame *Nature*, and made up of the ſame *Modeſty*, as if we ſhould enquire, why he was ſo long in *making* the World, and ſo much longer in *filling* it, ſince there is no doubt to be made, but that he could have *contracted*, not only his *own ſix Days Work*, but all, that has ſince been done by the *Induſtry* of Man, into the Product of a *Moment*; becauſe he could have *ſpoke* the Univerſe into being, and, with as much Eaſe, have ſaid, *Let there be a World ready peopled*, and there had been ſuch a World, as he did ſay, *Let there be Light, and there was Light*. Queſtions of this Kind, were they to be *indulged*, would never be at an End; for a forward and inquiſitive Temper might aſk, " Why did not God make the " World *ſooner*, why not *larger*, or why " but *one*, when it had been the ſame " Thing to him to have made ten Mil- " lions, and after that ten Millions more? " Why did he not make us *Angels*, inſtead " of *Men*, and *grown* Men, inſtead of " *Infants?* Why muſt our Mothers wait " to the Time of their Delivery, and " we till our Arrival at the *Fulneſs of the* " *Stature of a Man?*" But now the An- ſwer to theſe, and all ſuch Impertinences, is, — that, whatever God determines of this

(*a*) Gen. iv. 1. (*b*) Iſa. vii. 16. (*c*) Luke ii. 22. (*d*) Lev. xii. 8. (*e*) Matt. xiii. 55. (*f*) Matt. i. 25. 1 Tim. i. 15.

this Sort is always *beſt*, and fitteſt to be done, becauſe it is the *Reſult* of his infinite Wiſdom, Juſtice and Goodneſs, acting in *Concert*, and by Combination; and that, as to the *particular* Time of our Saviour's Incarnation and Birth, it was *therefore* the *propereſt* Seaſon, becauſe it was the Time *foretold* by the Prophets; and therefore by them foretold, becauſe it was *pre-ordain'd* by that Wiſdom, which could not err, or be miſtaken: But this *Argument* (though touch'd in ſome meaſure before) I ſhall have Occaſion to handle more fully, in making it the *Subject* of my following *Diſſertation*.

Why the miraculous Birth *of Chriſt is not ſo much* inſiſted *on in Scripture.*

THE Birth of our Saviour of the *Virgin Mary* was indeed a *miraculous* Event, and enough to give Credit to his *Pretenſions* of being the Son of God, had it been divulg'd, and when divulged, univerſally credited; but it was no ways proper to *divulge* it, nor could it be expected to gain *Credit*, until his other Actions had given Sanction to his Words, and proved him a Prophet ſent from Heaven. What happened therefore *firſt* in Time, was, of Neceſſity, to be *laſt* in Proof; and the Credibility of the *inviſible* Miracle of his Birth depended intirely on the *viſible* miraculous Proofs, by which he afterwards gave Evidence to his divine Commiſſion. Chriſt therefore, in the Courſe of his *Preaching*, could not, in *Decency*, inſiſt upon his miraculous Conception and Birth, until he had wrought ſuch Wonders, as none could do, *except God were with him*, and performed indeed the *laſt great* Act of all, upon which he had *pledged* the Veracity of his *Pretenſions*, his raiſing himſelf from the Dead. But when, by his Reſurrection, he had confirmed to his Diſciples all the *Miracles* he had done, and all the *Doctrines* he had taught in his Life-time; and, particularly, before his *Aſcenſion* into Heaven, had explained to them the Manner of his *Deſcent* from thence, which, among other Things, aſſured them of the *Truth*, and unfolded to them the *Reaſon* of the Miraculouſneſs of his Birth; then had they juſt Grounds to declare the *Dignity* of his Perſon, and to expect that Believers ſhould give Credit to the Account, they had received of his miraculous Nativity, though it was what, in the Nature of the Thing, could never properly be alledged in their Preaching, among the Proofs, they were to urge for the Conviction of *Infidels*. For, though it might naturally be expected, that a Perſon of ſuch Eminence, (*a*) *who came down from Heaven*, and (*b*) had *Glory with the Father*, *before the World was*, ſhould be born in a Manner *extraordinary*, and come into the World in a Way different from the Sons of Men: Yet, foraſmuch as the common Conception was not ſo, there was no occaſion for the Preachers of the Goſpel to advance ſuch Doctrines at firſt, as would fill their Audience with Surprize, and lay a *Stumbling-Block* in the Way of their Converſion. (*c*) *I have yet many Things to ſay unto you*, (are our Saviour's own Words to his Diſciples after three Year's Inſtruction) *but you cannot bear them*; and, for the ſame Reaſon, we find the Apoſtles, in their Diſcourſes to the People, but ſeldom mentioning ſome of the *fundamental* Articles of our Chriſtian Faith, and making a Reſerve, even from thoſe, that were admitted to *catechetical Lectures*, of ſuch *difficult* and abſtruſe Points, as required either more *Humility* to believe, or more *Sagacity* to comprehend, than could be expected in new *Converts*.

The Evangeliſts *Account of it* ſufficient.

BUT though the Apoſtles, upon theſe *prudential* Conſiderations, might, in their publick *Preachings*, and even in their *Epiſtles*, make the wonderful Birth of Chriſt no ſtanding *Topick* of Diſcourſe; yet the *Evangeliſts*, who were to tranſmit his Life to Poſterity, had abundant Reaſon to inſert this miraculous Circumſtance in the *Beginning* of it, when they were aſſured of the Truth of the Fact, both from the Teſtimony of his *Parents*, and that *Demonſtration of the Spirit and of Power*, which appeared in all his Actions. Theſe *Goſpels* were wrote for the Uſe of *Believers*, and not of *Infidels*. They were to convey the Truth of what our Saviour *was*, as well as what he *ſaid*, and *did*, to the lateſt Ages of Chriſtianity, and therefore no material Paſſage of his Life, in one or other of them, was to be omitted. *Matthew* wrote firſt: And, as he gives us a plain Account of the Angels appearing to *Joſeph*, his clearing *Mary*'s Honour and Virtue, informing him of the Child's *Original*, and adviſing him thereupon to make her his Wife, as he did; this the other *Evangeliſts* thought enough, without the Addition of any thing more, to clear our Saviour's Birth, and obviate the

(*a*) John iii. 13. (*b*) John xiii. 5. (*c*) John xvi. 12.

the common *Apprehenſion* of his being the *Son of Joſeph*.

How Jeſus might be called Joſeph's Son, though, in Reality, he was not ſo.

THE Son of *Joſeph* he might indeed be called (and, in Compliance to the common Reception, his Mother, no doubt, called him ſo) in a *legal* Senſe, becauſe all Laws allow, that the *Fruit* of the Wife's Womb, however it is begot, if it be a *Male*, ſhall be reputed the *Son* of her Huſband, and admitted to all the *Privileges* and Immunities of his Family. (*a*) Now, upon the Suppoſition, that *Mary* was the only Child of her Father *Eli*, and that *Jacob*, the Father of *Joſeph*, was his *Brother*, if *Joſeph* was lineally deſcended from *David*, upon his Marriage of *Mary* the *Line* muſt center in her Son, if ſo be that he had no prior Children, which, upon farther Enquiry, we ſhall find, that he had not. Allowing it then, that, in the *Eſtimate* of the Law, Chriſt might well enough be called the Son of *Joſeph*, and that both the *Evangeliſts* are here drawing * the Line of *Joſeph* only, becauſe *Genealogies* among the *Jews* were uſually made, not from the *Women*, but from the *Men*; yet, that *Jeſus* was not the *real* Son of *Joſeph*, is evident from (*b*) St. *Luke*'s calling him the *ſuppoſed Son*, or the Son, according to the Conſtruction of the Law, of *Joſeph*; and from (*c*) St. *Matthew*'s ſaying, not that *Joſeph* begat *Jeſus*, *who is called Chriſt*, but only, that he was the *Husband of* Mary, *of whom Chriſt was born*,

The Genealogies *in the two* Evangeliſts *ſettled, and reconciled.*

THERE is no Reaſon however to ſuppoſe that both the *Evangeliſts* are deducing the *Pedigree* of *Joſeph* only, ſince, (according to the Opinion of ſome of the *Ancients*, and the moſt conſiderable of *later* Writers) as *Joſeph*'s Pedigree is ſet down in St. *Matthew*'s, ſo *Mary*'s Lineage is recited in St. *Luke*'s Genealogy. To this Purpoſe we may obſerve, that the Deſigns of the two *Evangeliſts*, in their ſeveral Deductions of our Saviour's Pedigree, are very different: (*d*) That St. *Matthew* ‡ intends only to ſet down his *Political* or *Royal* Pedigree, by which he had a *Right* to the Crown of the *Jews*, but St. *Luke* ſhews his *natural Deſcent*, through the ſeveral Succeſſions of thoſe, from whom he *took Fleſh and Blood*: That *David* having three Sons by *Bathſheba*, beſides *Solomon*, to whom the next eldeſt was *Nathan*, Chriſt's *natural* Deſcent was ‖ not from *Solomon*, but from *Nathan*; for upon *Jeconiah*'s having no Iſſue, the Crown of *Judah* came into the Line of *Nathan* in *Salathiel*, who was ſucceeded by *Zerobabel*: That *Zerobabel* having two Sons, (*e*) *Abiud*, and *Rheſa*, from *Abiud*, the Elder, lineally deſcended *Joſeph*, according to St. *Matthew*'s Calculation, and from *Rheſa*, the Younger, according to St. *Luke*'s, the Virgin *Mary*, of whom *Jeſus* was born: That as it was a Cuſtom among the *Jews* not to reckon the *Woman* by Name in her Pedigree, but to reckon the *Husband* in Right of his Wife, ſo *Joſeph* is *twice* mentioned, firſt, in his own Right by St. *Matthew*, and ſecondly in his Wife's Right, by St. *Luke*; for *Mary* was properly the † Daughter of

(*a*) Vide *Whitby*'s Preface to Vol. I.

* By the Laws of *Inheritances* among the *Jews*, that no Eſtate might paſs out of a Family in Defect of *Heirs-Male*, Daughters might inherit, and Daughters, if they were *Heireſſes*, were obliged to marry to one, of their Father's *Tribe*, Lev. xxxvi. 8. ſo that the Virgin *Mary*, being the only Child of her Father, or, at leaſt, having no Brother, it was lawful for her to be *eſpouſed* to none out of her own Family; and therefore, though the Pedigree of *Joſeph* (as was *cuſtomary* in ſuch Caſes) only were ſet down, yet would this ſhew her Lineage and Family, as *certainly* as her own Pedigree could have done. *Jenkins*'s Reaſon. Vol. I.

(*b*) Chap. iii. 23. (*c*) Chap. i. 16. (*d*) *South*'s Ser. Vol. I.

‡ To which Purpoſe we may obſerve, that St. *Matthew* begins his Reckoning only from *Abraham*, to whom *the firſt Promiſe of the Kingdom was made*, Gen. xvii. 6. but St. *Luke* runs his Line up to *Adam*, the firſt *Head* and Fountain of human Nature, which fairly ſhews, that one deduced only his Title to the *Crown*, the other the natural Deſcent of his *Humanity*. *South*'s Ser. Vol. III.

‖ In Oppoſition to this, the *Jews*, at this Day, make it an *Article* of their *Creed*, that the *Meſſias* was naturally to deſcend from *Solomon*, and pronounce a Curſe upon all thoſe, that aſſert the contrary: And yet they have not been able to diſcover who was the Son of *Jeconiah*, whom *God wrote childleſs*, nor to ſhew any Reaſon, why, if *Jeconiah* had any *natural Iſſue* of his own, the Crown and Sceptre of *Judah* came to be devolv'd upon the Line of *Nathan*, as it actually was in *Salathiel*, and his Succeſſors. Concerning *Solomon*, indeed, God promiſes, that he *would eſtabliſh the Throne of his Kingdom over* Iſrael *for ever*, 1 Chron. xxii. 10. but he does not promiſe, that he would eſtabliſh it in *his Seed, or Line*; and though it be frequently ſaid in Scripture, that the *Meſſias* ſhould deſcend from *David*, yet it is never ſaid, that he ſhould deſcend from *Solomon*. *South*'s Ser. Vol. III.

(*e*) Compare Matt. i. 13. with Luke iii. 7.

† By an ancient and received *Tradition*, *Mary* is reported to have been the Daughter of *Joachim*, and *Anna*: But this makes no Difference, becauſe *Eli* and *Joachim*, however they are two Words, and not very much alike, yet are they but one Name, and ſignify but one Perſon: For *Eli* is a *Diminutive* of *Eliakim*, and

Eliakim

Eli, and *Joſeph* is only named after him, as being his *Son-in-Law*: That though *Jeſus* truly deſcended from *Mary* only, yet did not he derive his Title to the Kingdom of the *Jews* by her Line, which was from *Rheſa*, the younger Son of *Zerobabel*, but from *Joſeph*, who was of the elder Line, by *Abiud*; but this elder Line failing in * *Joſeph*, who had no *Iſſue*, the Right of Inheritance devolved upon one of the *younger* Line, *viz.* upon *Mary*, and, conſequently, upon *Jeſus*, her Son, and legal Heir.

In this Method of deducing our Saviour's Lineage from *David*, the *Suppoſitions* are not many, and yet they *reconcile*, in a great meaſure, the two *Evangeliſts*, and anſwer moſt of the (*a*) *Difficulties*, and Objections, that *occur* in their *Calculations*; for which we have only this to ſay in their Behalf, — that they were ſuch, as the *Jews*, who were exactly *ſkill'd* in Matters of this Nature, and wanted not Malice to expoſe their Faults, when firſt they appeared in the World, never once pretended to impugn them; a ſtrong Argument (*b*) (as one obſerves) that they were entirely the ſame with the Regiſters of the Genealogies then extant, which, in their *publick Records*, as well as *private* Books, were kept with great Care and Exactneſs, both in Expectation of the *Meſſias*, and in Compliance to the Conſtitution of their *Government*.

The Prophecy of the Woman's Seed, (*tho'* Eve *conceived it* otherwiſe.)

Upon the *Fall* of our firſt Parents, God is repreſented, as coming down from Heaven to pronounce Sentence againſt them, and their *Seducer*. The Sentence againſt the Man and the Woman is plain, and perſpicuous enough; but that againſt the Serpent, (*c*) *I will put Enmity between thee, and the Woman, and between thy Seed, and her Seed, It ſhall bruiſe thy Head, and thou ſhalt bruiſe his Heel*, is not only a little *obſcure*, and *allegorical*, but, in ſome meaſure, † *abſurd*, and *ridiculous*, taken in a *literal* Senſe; and we muſt therefore, to find out the true Meaning of it, look a little farther.

St. *PAUL*, drawing a *Compariſon* between the *Covenant* made with *Abraham*, and the Law given by *Moſes*, has theſe Words: (*d*) *Now unto* Abraham *and his Seed were the Promiſes made; he ſaith not, and to* Seeds, *as of many, but as of one, and to* thy Seed, *which is Chriſt:* (*e*) From whence we may learn, that the Word *Seed* is applicable, not to a *Stock*, a *Tribe*, or Family only, but to a *ſingle Perſon*, and, particularly, to *Chriſt*; as, from other Paſſages we may collect, that by the *Serpent* we are to underſtand the *Devil*, in the Temptation of *Eve* diſguiſed in the Form of a *Serpent*, and, conſequently, that our Saviour's *deſtroying his Works*, or gaining a compleat Victory over Sin and Death, may be repreſented by his *bruiſing the Serpent's Head*, as the *Sufferings*, he was to undergo in obtaining ſuch a Conqueſt, are not unfitly prefigured by the other's *bruiſing his Heel*. That in ſome ſuch Senſe as this, our

Eliakim is the ſame with *Jehoiachim*, or *Joachim*, as appears from 2 Kings xxiii. 34. and 2 Chron. xxxvi. 4. to ſay nothing of the Teſtimony of Rabbi *Haccanus*, the Son of *Nehemiah*, a Doctor of great Eſteem among the *Jews*, who tells us, that there was a Virgin in *Bethlehem Judah*, whoſe Name was *Mary*, the Daughter of *Eli*, of the Kindred of *Zerobabel*, the Son of *Salathiel*, of the Tribe of *Judah*, who was betroth'd to one *Joſeph*, of the ſame Kindred, and Tribe. *South*'s Ser. Vol. III. and *Heylyn*, quoting *Speed* in his Tract of *Genealogy*, Chap 7.

* For if *Joſeph* had had any Children, either by *Mary*, or any otherwiſe, they, as coming from the elder Line of *Abiud* by *Joſeph* their Father, muſt have claim'd the *Inheritance* of the *Kingdom* in his Right, and not *Jeſus*, the Son of *Mary*, who deſcended from a *younger* Line, and ſo could not *legally* inherit, but upon Default of Iſſue from *Joſeph*, the only *remaining* Heir of the *Elder*. *South*'s Ser. Vol. III.

(*a*) Thoſe, who are deſirous to ſee more upon this Subject, may conſult *Spanhemius* in his *Dubia Evangelica*, *Surenhuſius* in his *Conciliationes*, *Kidder*'s Meſſias, and *Berriman* at *Boyle*'s Lect. *&c.* (*b*) *Jenkins*'s Reaſon. Vol. I (*c*) Gen. iii. 15.

† To illuſtrate this, we find a very learned and ingenious Author repreſenting the Matter in this Light: "Do "but imagine, *ſays he*, that you ſee God coming to *judge* the Offenders, and *Adam* and *Eve* before him, in the utmoſt "Diſtreſs; that you hear God inflicting *Pains*, and *Sorrows*, and *Miſery*, and *Death* upon the firſt of human Race, "and that, in the Midſt of all this Scene of Woe and great Calamity, you hear God *foretelling*, with great *Solemnity*, a very *trivial* Accident, that ſhould ſometime happen in the World, *viz. That Serpents ſhould "be apt to bite Men by the Heels, and that Men would be apt to revenge themſelves by ſtriking them on the Head:* "What has this *Trifle* to do with the *Loſs of Mankind*, with the *Corruption* of the *natural* and *moral* World, "and the *Ruin* of all the *Glory* and *Happineſs* of the Creation? *Great Comfort* it was to *Adam*, doubtleſs, after "telling him, that his *Days ſhould be ſhort*, and full of Miſery, and his End without Hope, to let him know, "that he ſhould now and then kick a Snake on the *Head*, but that, in Return, the Snake ſhould often bite "him by the *Heel*. *Adam*, ſurely, could not underſtand the Prophecy in this Senſe, though ſome of his Sons "have ſo underſtood it: A plain Indication, how much more ſome Men are concern'd to maintain a *literal* "Interpretation of Scripture, than they are to make it ſpeak *common Senſe*. *Sherlock* on Prophecy.

(*d*) Gal. iii. 16. (*e*) *Sherlock* on Prophecy.

our *firſt Parents* underſtood this *Prophecy*, is plain from the *Reflection*, which *Eve* made upon the Birth of her firſt Son *Cain*, *(a) I have gotten a Man from the Lord*, hoping, that the firſt who came was the Perſon, who ſhould ſubdue the Enemy of Mankind, and avenge her Quarrel. But the *Fulneſs of Time* was not yet come: *(b) Eve was ignorant of this one Thing, that one Day is with the Lord as a thouſand Years, and a thouſand Years as one Day*; nor did ſhe conſider, that her Body was not a *proper Receptacle* for the Saviour of the World, who was to be produced without any *Commixture* with Man; for which Reaſon we find him called *the Seed of the Woman* in a peculiar Senſe; in a Senſe, wherein no other Man was ever ſo called, as being conceived without any human Help, formed of the Subſtance of his Mother's Body only, and born into the World, when *ſhe knew not a Man*, and therefore was an *immaculate* Virgin.

Of that of Jeremiah.

(c) BEHOLD the Days come, ſaith the Lord, *that I will make a new Covenant with the Houſe of* Iſrael, *and with the Houſe of* Judah, *not according to the Covenant that I made with their Fathers, in the Day that I took them by the Hand to bring them out of the Land of* Egypt. That this Covenant was to commence in the Days of the *Meſſias*, the *Jews* themſelves allow, and was therefore a good Reaſon for the Prophet's aſking, *(d) Why the People would go about in their Back-ſliding?* and a powerful Motive to engage them to *return*, ſince God intended not only to make a new and moſt gracious Covenant with them, but to ſend the great *Mediator* of that Covenant into the World in a new and miraculous Manner, *(e) to create a new Thing on the Earth, that a Woman ſhould compaſs a Man.* This, and no other can be the proper Senſe of the Words: For where, I pray, is the *Miraculouſneſs* of a *Woman's ſeeking to*, or *courting* a Man, when the *Modeſty* of the Sex is very often found too weak a Reſtraint among us; and among the *Jews*, their very *Law* authoriſed the Wife of *him, that died without Children*, to lay claim to her Huſband's Brother, or, in Default of one, to the next of *Kin*; nay, when the Sex was grown ſo very impudent, that we read of *(f) ſeven Women taking hold of one Man*, and ſaying, *we will eat our own Bread, and wear our own Apparel, only let us be called by thy Name, to take away our Reproach?* Where the *Miraculouſneſs* of meeting with ſome *Viragos*, or Women of more than maſculine Spirits, who are able to *compaſs* or get the better of a Man, in a very rough Senſe, and to play the Part of a (*g*) *Jael*, or a (*h*) *Judith*, to a *Siſera*, or an *Holofernes?* Or (even taking the Word in a *national* Senſe) where the *Miraculouſneſs*, that a People, miſerably broken, and become as weak as Women in Compariſon, ſhould reſume their Courage, oppoſe their Enemies ſtrenuouſly, and bring their Oppreſſors under Subjection? To apply the Prophecy, which talks of *creating a new Thing in the Earth*, to ſuch *common* and *trivial* Incidents, as theſe, is *playing* with Things ſacred, and making a Jeſt of the Spirit of God, whereby it was dictated.

And Iſaiah *explained and applied to Chriſt's* Birth.

AND, in like manner, how low a Notion is it to apply the Prophecy in *Iſaiah* of a *Virgin's conceiving and bearing a Son*, to any young Woman in *Judah*, that was then *unmarried?* For, not to inſiſt on the *original* Word *Alma*, which (as learned Men obſerve) ſignifies almoſt always a *Virgin untainted by Man*, and which the *Greek Tranſlators* before Chriſt (who underſtood the Signification of the *Hebrew* Word much better, than any *Moderns* can pretend to) have ſo rendered in this Place; how can we imagine, that, after ſo pompous an *Introduction*, and ſo important a Name, as that of *Immanuel*, the Prophet ſhould mean no more at laſt by a *Virgin's conceiving*, than that a *young Woman* ſhould be with Child? Is there any thing uncommon in this? Does not this happen conſtantly by the ordinary Laws of *Generation?* And therefore, to what Purpoſe is that ſolemn *Apparatus*, which the Prophet makes uſe of, to raiſe an Expectation of ſome mighty Matter? *Hear, O Houſe of* David, — *behold the Lord himſelf will give you a Sign*, worthy to proceed from him, and able to content you all: And what is it? why, a *young married Woman ſhall be with Child.* How *ridiculous* muſt ſuch a *Diſcovery* make the *Prophet*, and how highly muſt it *enrage* the *Audience*, to hear a Man, at ſuch a Juncture as this, begin an *idle* and impertinent Tale, which ſeems to banter, and inſult their Miſery, rather than adminiſter any Conſolation under it?

THEIR

(*a*) Gen. iv. 1. (*b*) 2 Pet. iii. 8. (*c*) Jer. xxxi. 31, 32. (*d*) Jer. xxxi. 22. (*e*) Ibid. (*f*) Iſa. iv. 1. (*g*) Judges iv. (*h*) Judith xiii.

THEIR Caſe, in ſhort, was this: — In the Days of *Ahaz* King of *Judah*, *Rezin* King of *Syria*, and *Pekah* King of *Iſrael*, united their Forces to come againſt *Jeruſalem*, which put the King, and his Nobles into ſuch a Conſternation, that their *(a) Hearts were moved* (according to the Prophet's Expreſſion) *as the Trees of the Wood are moved with the Wind.* Hereupon *Iſaiah* is commanded by God to go, and meet *Ahaz*, (but not to forget to take his Son *Shear-Jaſhub* along with him) and to aſſure him, that the Deſign form'd againſt him by the two *confederate* Kings ſhould not proſper. The King however gave no Credit to his Words: Whereupon he undertakes to perform whatever *Miracle*, he ſhould aſk, in Confirmation of the Truth of what he promiſed; but the King ſtill perſiſting in his *Infidelity*, the Prophet turns from him, and, addreſſing himſelf to the Nobles of the Royal Family, gives them two Signs, *one* in his Son *Shear-Jaſhub*, which would ſhortly come to paſs, and the *other* in *Immanuel*, to be born of a *Virgin*, but many Years hence.

THAT the Prophet's Son was concerned in this Affair, ſeems to be evident from God's commanding his Father to take him along with him, when he went to meet the King; becauſe we can aſſign no other Reaſon for it, but that he was to be of uſe, in ſome Shape or other, to inforce what the Prophet ſhould be ordered to ſay. 'Tis but ſuppoſing then, that the Prophet, when he uttered theſe Words, *(b) Before the Child ſhall know to refuſe the Evil, and chuſe the Good, the Land ſhall be forſaken of both her Kings*, pointed at his own Child, who might then either ſtand by him, or be in his Arms, and the whole Difficulty is ſolved; for the Prophet only foretells, that, before his Son, who was very young, ſhould arrive at the Years of Diſcretion, the two Kings, who then threatened an Invaſion, ſhould themſelves be deſtroyed, which in a ſhort *(c)* Space of Time, accordingly happened: And of what Comfort the other *Sign*, or the Part of the Prophecy, relating to *Immanuel*, even though to be born many Ages after, was to the Houſe of *David*, cannot well be doubted, if we do but conſider, that it aſſured them *(d)* of the *Truth* and Veracity of God's *Promiſe* (which ſeem'd to be call'd in Queſtion by the King's Diffidence) in that he would not ſuffer them to be deſtroy'd, nor the *Sceptre to depart from* Judah, until the Meſſias *came:* That it aſſured them of his *Almighty Power*, in that he could *create a new Thing in the Earth* by making a *Virgin conceive*, and therefore wanted not Ability to deliver them out of the Hands of their moſt powerful Enemies; and that it aſſured them likewiſe of his *peculiar* Favour, in that he had decreed the *Meſſias* ſhould deſcend from their *Family*; ſo that the People, to whom he had vouchſafed ſo high a Dignation, might depend upon his *Protection*, and, *under the Shadow of his Wings*, think themſelves ſecure, until the Menaces of theſe *Tyrants* were over-paſſed.

Why Mary ſubmitted to the Law of Purification.

THUS do theſe *Prophecies*, when rightly underſtood, certainly relate to a *Virgin Mother:* But *then* the *Birth* of our bleſſed Saviour was ſo *perfectly* different from that of common Men, that his Mother could not poſſibly have any concern with the *Law of Purification.* The Conception of her Son, by an Operation of Almighty Power, totally myſterious and divine, left no Room at all for *original* Sin, nor was ſhe, in Reality, in any Degree ſubject even to *legal* Uncleanneſs upon this Account; but ſince her being a Mother was ſufficiently *notorious*, and the ſuper-natural Manner of her being ſuch, was a *Secret*, as yet not ripe for Diſcovery; and ſince, it was thought convenient, that her Huſband *Joſeph*, ſhould, for ſome Time, paſs for her Son's Father in common Reputation, it was proper for her, who was the Mother of him, who *(e) was made under the Law*, and came to *fulfil all Righteouſneſs*, to ſubmit to an Ordinance, which was inſtituted as a *Form* of *female* Thankſgiving: And if ſo, ſurely never were Thanks ſo juſtly due for the Birth of any Son, as this; never from any Mother, as from her, who had the Honour to bring forth her *own*, and the World's God and Saviour, the Bleſſing and Expectation *of all the Earth.*

Why our Saviour is called her Firſt-born, *and his* Brethren *who?*

HE indeed is called his Mother's *Firſt-born*, but it does not therefore follow, that ſhe had any Children ſubſequent to him. That ſhe had none before him, is all that it implies; and fit it was, that he ſhould be ſtiled her *Firſt-born*, that thereby it might

(a) Iſa. vii. 2. *(b)* Iſa. vii. 16. *(c)* Vide 2 Kings xv. 30. and xvi. 9. *(d) Kidder's* Meſſias, Part II. *(e)* Gal. iv. 4.

might be ſignified that he was the *ſame* individual Child, that the Goſpel informs us was miraculouſly *conceived by the Holy Ghoſt*; though the *Evangeliſt*, in calling him ſo, might perhaps have Reſpect to the Right of *Primogeniture*, which, (according to *Jewiſh* Writers) conſiſted chiefly in theſe three Privileges, *Principality*, the *Prieſthood*, and a *Preference in the Inheritance*; to all which the Author to (*a*) the *Hebrews*, to (*b*) the *Romans*, and (*c*) the *Coloſſians*, proves our Saviour to have an undoubted Title. His *Primogeniture* is therefore mentioned, as a *Note* of that Honour and Dignity, to which by Birth he was entitled: And *Joſeph's not knowing* his Mother *until he was born*, is no Intimation, that he knew her *afterwards*, becauſe the Word *until*, (even in common Speech) has not ſo much a Relation to what happened *afterwards*, as to what happened *antecedently* to the Time, whereof this *Particle* denotes the Period; and, in many Places of Scripture (according to the ſacred Phraſe) implies, a *perpetual Negation* * of the Matter in Diſpute. And, in like manner, the Word *Brother*, in the *Jewiſh* Idiom, is taken in a larger Signification to denote any Degree of Conſanguinity: And therefore ſince it appears, † upon Examination, that *Mary*, the Mother of *James* and *Joſes*, *&c.* was not the ſame *Mary* with the Mother of our Lord, but another *Mary*, the Wife of *Cleophas*, her Siſter; in virtue of this Relation, her Children, according to the Language of the *Jews*, might properly be called our Saviour's *Brethren*. Thus there ſeems no Foundation in Scripture to ſuppoſe, that the Mother of our Lord ever changed the State of her *Virginity*; and, were we to examine the Queſtion by any Light, that our own Minds can afford, it ſeems more reaſonable to conclude, that, in Conſideration of the peculiar *Glory*, whereby ſhe was diſtinguiſh'd in the Conception of Chriſt, ſhe would forever inviolably maintain it. But, this, as we ſaid, is no expreſs *Article* of our Creed, and therefore we may believe or diſbelieve it without incurring any Cenſure.

The Reſpect *due to the bleſſed Virgin*

WONDERFUL indeed was the *Grace* and Favour of God, in electing her, above all the Daughters in *Iſrael*, to be the happy Inſtrument of bringing into the World the long-expected and deſired *Meſſias*; in electing her, as the only Woman to take off the *Stain* and Diſhonour of her *Sex*, and, by the Birth of a Saviour and Redeemer of the World, to make a Reparation for the Damage ſuſtain'd by the Tranſgreſſion of *Eve*; and in electing her for the Inhabitation of his own *eternal* Son, who, by an ineffable *Conjunction*, united himſelf to the human Nature, which was miraculouſly conceived and formed in her, and ſo became both God and Man in one Perſon. The ſacred Writings indeed make but * ſeldom mention of her Name, and give us no large Diſplay of her excellent Qualities; but excellent Qualities no Doubt ſhe had recommend her to God's peculiar Favour; and, from the little, that we read of her, we may learn, (*d*) that her ſpotleſs *Purity* both in Mind and Body, the *Firmneſs* of her

(*a*) Paſſim. (*b*) Chap. viii. 17. (*c*) Chap. i. 16.

* Thus in Gen. xxviii. 15. *I will not leave thee*, until *I have done that, which I have ſpoken to thee of*, i. e. I will never leave thee. In 1 Sam. xv. 35. Samuel *came no more to ſee* Saul, until *the Day of his Death*, i. e. he never came again. In 2 Sam. vi. 23. Michal, *the Daughter of* Saul, *had no Child* until *the Day of her Death*, never had any. In Job xxvii. 5. *'Till I die, I will not remove my Integrity from me*, i. e. never part with it; and (to name no more) in Iſaiah xxii. 14. *ſurely this Iniquity ſhall not be purged from you* till *ye die*, i. e. ſhall never be purged *from you*.

† Thus we read in St. *John*, that *there ſtood by the Croſs of* Jeſus, *his Mother, and his Mother's Siſter*, Mary *the Wife of* Cleophas, *and* Mary Magdalen, xix. 25. In the reſt of the *Evangeliſts* we find *Mary Magdalen*, and *Mary the Mother of* James *and* Joſes; and again, at the Sepulchre, Mary Magdalen, *and the other* Mary: The other *Mary* therefore, by the Conjunction of theſe *Teſtimonies*, appears to be *Mary*, the *Wife of* Cleophas, and the *Mother of* James *and* Joſes; and, conſequently, *James* and *Joſes*, the Brethren of our Lord, were not the Sons of *Mary* his Mother, but of the other *Mary*; and therefore called the *Brethren of our Lord*, becauſe that *other Mary*, the Wife of *Cleophas*, was his Mother's Siſter. *Pearſon* on the Creed.

* After the Relation of her *bringing forth* our Saviour, her *Preſentation* of him in the Temple, their *Exile* into *Egypt*, and *Return* to *Nazareth*, we hear of her very *ſeldom*, and that only *occaſionally*. At the *Marriage Feaſt of* Cana *in* Galilee, ſhe is mentioned as preſent, John ii. 1. *&c.* and at another Time, when ſhe came with our Lord's *Brethren* (as they are call'd) to enquire after him, Matt. xii. 48, *&c.* ſhe is taken Notice of as ſtanding by the *Croſs* of her Son, beholding his Paſſion, and thereby fulfilling the Prophecy of good *old Simeon*, that a *Sword ſhould pierce through her own Soul*, Luke ii. 35. And, laſtly, ſhe is mentioned as preſent at that *Aſſembly* of Chriſtians, wherein *Matthias* was elected to the *Apoſtleſhip*, in the Room of *Judas*, Acts i. 14. In the reſt of the Writings of the *New* Teſtament, in the Remainder of the *Acts*, and the *Epiſtles* of the Apoſtles, ſhe is not once named, nor the leaſt Intimation given us of any *Invocation*, or *religious* Worſhip belonging to her. Biſhop *Bull*'s Ser. Vol. I.

(*d*) *Wake's* Ser. Vol. .

her Faith, the *Fervour* of her Devotion, and the becoming Ornament of her great *Humility*, made her the moſt fit, of any of her Sex, for the Holy Ghoſt to *over-ſhadow*, or for the Son of the moſt higheſt to *inhabit*. For this Reaſon we make no Queſtion, but that God, who ſhew'd her ſo much Favour on Earth, has alſo very highly exalted her in Heaven, and, among all the Race of *Adam*, next unto him, who is God as well as Man, we think it very probable, that to the chiefeſt Place in his Kingdom he hath advanced *her*, who brought forth his Son into the World. *(a)* For this Reaſon we think, and ſpeak of her with the utmoſt Deference and Reſpect; we do not *ordinarily* mention her Name, without a *Preface*, or Epithet of *Honour*; and, as we celebrate two (*b*) *annual Feſtivals* in her Memorial, we then *ſolemnly* recount what the holy Scriptures have recorded of God's Mercies towards her, and encourage one another to bleſs and praiſe him upon that Account; and for this Reaſon we make uſe of *her own Words* to expreſs our grateful Acknowledgement of them, and, in our daily Service, either *ſinging* or *rehearſing* her excellent *Magnificat*, make it the *Form* of our own conſtant Thankſgiving to God in our ſacred Aſſemblies.

(c) Such Honour we pay to the bleſſed Virgin: And for more than this we think we have no *Authority*, either from *Scripture* or *Antiquity*. Let thoſe, who give her * *laviſh* and exceſſive Titles, and Attributes, who pay her the Honour of *Invocation*, and aſcribe ſuch † *Perfections* and Powers to her, as ſhe never had, nor can have; who divide the divine Empire between her and her Son, and, from a ‡ modeſt and humble Creature, transform her into an *Idol* of Pride and Vanity: Let thoſe, I ſay, who, by ſuch Practices as theſe, occaſion the *Objection*, and give Scandal to all ſober Chriſtians, take care how they anſwer it. Our Judgment of the Matter is defin'd in the *Senſe*, and Language of the *Ancients: Honour and Eſteem the Memory of the Mother, but worſhip and adore the Perſon of the Son*; for, whatever Place ſhe may have in our *good Opinions*, 'tis *inconſiſtent with Piety to let her have any in our Devotions.*

(a) Bull's Ser. Vol. I. *(b)* The Feaſts of her Annunciation. *(c) Bull's* Ser. Vol. I.

* Such are the *Titles*, that we meet with in the *Litany of the bleſſed Virgin*, viz. *Queen of Heaven, ſovereign Lady of Angels, Archangels, Patriarchs, Prophets, Apoſtles, Martyrs, Confeſſors, and all Saints. Sourſe of the Fountain of all Grace, Refuge of Sinners, Comfort of the Afflicted, and Advocate of all Chriſtians. Bull's* and *Wake's* Ser. Vol. I.

† To this Purpoſe we find *Creſſet*, in his *Devotions to the bleſſed Virgin*, making her ſo far the *Queen of Heaven and Earth*, as to give her a Power of all the Grace, that is to be beſtowed on Mankind: Of *ſaving* her *Votaries*, if they do but ſufficiently *love* and worſhip her, whatever their *Affections*, or Services may be towards *God Almighty*: Of *fetching* Souls, not only out of *Purgatory*, but even from *Hell itſelf*, by her *Authority*: And of *ordering* all the Events of the Fortunes of Men, and Kingdoms; inſomuch, that not a *Battle* can be fought, nor a *Victory* obtain'd, but by the Favour of this *Pallas*, to whom the Succeſs is due, and to whom the Praiſe and Honour thereof ought to be return'd. *Wake's* Ser. Vol. I.

‡ For how contrary to all *Modeſty* are the Tales of thoſe, who have had the Aſſurance to tell us of the *amorous Addreſſes* of the bleſſed Virgin to certain Perſons, her devout Worſhippers, chuſing them for her *Huſbands*, beſtowing *Kiſſes* upon them, and preſenting them with *Bracelets*, and Rings of her Hair, as Love Tokens; and how contrary to the Character of her *Humility* is the Account of the *Crown*, ſhe is adorned with in Heaven; how many *Stars* went into her *Atchievement*, what *Badges* her Servants wore, and what *Speeches* and Complements were made to her on the Day of her *Coronation*, all the *holy Trinity* concurring in the Ceremony, and all the *Powers of Heaven and Earth ſinging Praiſes to her, and adoring her.* Offic. B. Virg. Antwerp, from *Wake's* Ser. Vol. I.

DIS-

DISSERTATION IX.

Of the Time of our SAVIOUR'S BIRTH.

This Time determin'd by God.

(a) *KNOWN unto God*, ſays the Apoſtle, *are all his Works, from the Beginning of the World.* Long before the Creation of it, he adjuſted the *original Plan* (if we may ſo ſpeak) in his all-containing Mind, and had every *Event*, that could poſſibly happen, from the firſt to the laſt Period of it, under his View and Conſideration: And, as the ſad *Fall* of Man, by the Abuſe of his Liberty, and his happy *Reſtoration*, by the *Intervention* of Grace, and the *Incarnation* of his Son, were *Occurrences* too weighty and momentous, to be overlook'd, he *permitted* the *one*, and *pre-ordain'd* the *other* both as to the *Time*, and *Manner* of its Accompliſhment: And, as the Time of his Son's Incarnation was then prefix'd and determin'd by his infinite Wiſdom, there is no Doubt to be made, but that the *Seaſon*, which he was pleaſed to appoint, was, to all Intents and Purpoſes, the propereſt. Sufficient therefore, to bound our Curioſity, it is to ſay, that the Time of our Saviour's *Nativity* was *ſuch*, as God, who has *put all Seaſons in his own Power*, foreſaw was the fitteſt, and accordingly *decreed* it. So far however as he has been pleaſed in holy Writ to open unto us the *Secret* of his Counſel, and to make us acquainted with the Deſign of his Son's *Manifeſtation*, we may proceed with Safety to enquire into the *Reaſons*, that might determine his Providence, to make choice of that *particular* Juncture, rather than any other.

And foretold by his Prophets.

Now we can hardly ſuppoſe, that ſo eminent a Perſon, as the Son of God, ſhould be ſent into the World, without ſome *previous* Notice of his Coming; and, to direct the Hopes and Expectations of Mankind, ſome *Limitations* ſet to the very Time, when he was to make his Appearance. To this Purpoſe we may obſerve, that, in ſeveral (*b*) Predictions, God had promiſed, that this great Event ſhould come to paſs during the Continuance of the *Jewiſh Polity*, or before the utter Subverſion of that Government both in Church and State; and that, when he had once thus promiſed, his Truth was obliged to perform, what his Wiſdom before had decreed, and his *Spirit by the Mouth of his Prophets* had foretold. In ſending his Son into the World therefore, God was to have Regard to the Credit of his Prophecies; and, as he had made the Deſtruction of the *Jewiſh* Government the apparent *Boundary* of them, there was a Neceſſity, that they ſhould receive their Accompliſhment in his Son's being born into the World in that *Period:* And accordingly the *Jews* themſelves will not deny, that, in the *Decline* of their State, and a little before its total *Diſſolution*, there did appear a Perſon with theſe Pretenſions, and wrought many Miracles in Confirmation of them, but then their *Subterfuge* is, that God, for their *Iniquities*, has *protracted* the Performance of his Promiſe in this Reſpect, beyond the Time appointed, never conſidering, that the great Deſign of the *Meſſias*'s Appearance was, to be (*c*) *wounded for their Tranſgreſſions*, and, by his precious Bloodſhedding, to (*d*) *open a Fountain for Sin and for Uncleanneſs.* Since therefore the Time for the Coming of Chriſt was by the Prophets preciſely fix'd and determined, and ſince the Birth of our *Lord Jeſus Chriſt* does ſo well accord with the Term, that they *unanimouſly* do aſſign, we may ſafely conclude, that (*e*) the *Fulneſs of Time*, ſpoken of by the Apoſtle, commenced at the fulfilling of theſe Prophecies, and that *God then ſent forth his Son*, becauſe, upon ſo *authentick* an Atteſtation as the Prophets gave, thoſe, who had the *divine Oracles* ſubmitted to their Peruſal; if at all they attended to them, could not, at that Time, but be prepar'd for his Coming.

Other Expedients *tried before, and the ſad* Corruption *of Religion among* Jews.

WE can hardly believe, that God would have ſent his Son into the World, had there not been ſome *Neceſſity* for it, and that all other Means had been tried, but tried to no Purpoſe, before this laſt Expedient did take place. In the Beginning of the World, *Revelations* were ſo frequent, and the Will of God ſo well known, that, conſidering the *Longevity* of Mankind, *oral Tradition* might

(*a*) Acts xv. 18. (*b*) Gen. xlix. 10. Deut. ix. 24. Hag. ii. 7. Mal. iii. &c. (*c*) Iſa. liii. 5. (*d*) Zech. xiii. 1. (*e*) Gal. iv. 4.

might have been handed down from Father to Son with great Facility; and yet, notwithſtanding this Advantage, in a few Ages the *Earth* was ſo overſpread with all manner of Wickedneſs, that God was provoked by an *univerſal Deluge* to deſtroy it all, except one Family, (*a*) *that found Grace in his Eyes.* After the *Flood*, the Race of Mankind was ſo diminiſhed, and the Remembrance of God's late Judgment ſo very affecting, one would think, that the *Precepts* delivered to *Noah*, together with his own Inſtructions and Example, might be ſuppoſed ſufficient to put the few *Survivers* in mind of their Duty, and to contain them within the Bounds of it; but we find they were not: Their Influence was ſoon loſt, and the *Infection* of Wickedneſs and Idolatry prevailed. To make ſome Stand againſt this, God choſe to himſelf *one Perſon*, from whom, by a Courſe of Miracles, he raiſed a mighty Nation, and to them gave a *written* Law, wherein were *Statutes* and *Judgments* more righteous, than other People had, and, together with them, ſome *ceremonial* Ordinances, to keep them from mingling with the *idolatrous* Cuſtoms of other Nations: But all this would not do; the Covenant of the Lord was deſpiſed, and the Land was polluted with Idols. To oppoſe this *general* Corruption, God *ſent out his Servants, the Prophets daily, riſing up early, and ſending them*, to remind his People of their Tranſgreſſions, and to denounce heavy Judgments upon them, unleſs they would repent; but they (*b*) *hearken'd not unto him, nor inclined their Ear, but harden'd their Neck*, ſo that he was obliged to ſend them away into *Captivity* for *ſeventy Years*, which cur'd them indeed of their *Idolatry*, but run them into a contrary Extreme of *Superſtition*, inſomuch that they *reverſed* the juſt Order of *religious* Duties, by preferring *Sacrifices* before *Mercy*, and a few little *Obſervances* before the *eternal* Laws of Righteouſneſs and Truth. The *Commandments of God* were almoſt wholly ſwallow'd up by the *Traditions of Men*, and the *weightier Matters* of the Law forced to give way to the vain and groundleſs Doctrines of the *Scribes* and *Phariſees*; and then was the Time for him to appear, (*c*) *who*, (as the Prophet *Malachi* deſcribes him) *was to be like a Refiner's Fire, and like Fullers Soap; who was to ſit as a Refiner and Purifier of Silver, and to purify the Sons of* Levi, *and purge them as Gold and Silver, that they might offer unto the Lord an Offering in Righteouſneſs.*

And Gentiles.

THE *Gentiles*, all this while, were ſuffered to walk in the *Darkneſs*, which themſelves had choſen, when they forſook the true God, and reſorted to the Worſhip of dumb Idols. What *Advances* they made in other Parts of Knowledge, contributed very little to their Improvements in Religion. Quite contrary: Their *Superſtition* ſeems to have increaſed with their Learning, and every freſh Diſcovery entitled its *Author* to religious Addreſſes; ſo that the *true* God was loſt in a *Croud* of *falſe* ones, and his Worſhip was corrupted, as the Vices of thoſe, who rivalled him, gave Occaſion of *debauching* it with impure *Mixtures*. And, conſonant to their Principles and religious Notions, were their Lives and Practices: For, who can read the *firſt Chapter* of the *Epiſtle* to the *Romans* without Amazement, and many mortifying Reflections, to find rational Creatures capable of ſo wretched a *Degeneracy*, that no *Object* was ſo deſpicable, as not to be thought worthy of divine Honours, no *Vice* ſo deteſtable and brutiſh, as not to obtain, not only in common Converſation, but even in their *Rituals* of Religion, and moſt ſolemn *Acts* of publick Worſhip? For (*d*) *having their Underſtandings darkened* (as the *Apoſtle* tells us) *and being alienated from the Light of God, through the Ignorance that was in them, becauſe of the Blindneſs of their Hearts*, they not only incurr'd the groſſeſt Idolatry, but (*e*) *were filled* likewiſe *with Unrighteouſneſs, Fornication, Wickedneſs, Covetouſneſs, Maliciouſneſs; were full of Envy, Murther, Debate, Deceit, Malignity; were Whiſperers, Backbiters, Haters of God, deſpiteful, proud Boaſters, Inventors of evil Things; were diſobedient to Parents, without Underſtanding, Covenant-breakers, without natural Affection, implacable, unmerciful, and* (what is worſe ſtill) *not only did theſe Things themſelves, but took Pleaſure* likewiſe *in thoſe that did them.* In this Light it is that the Apoſtle repreſents the State of the *heathen* World, not long before the Coming of Chriſt: And therefore when the *Face* of Religion was become ſo univerſally deform'd, and the Manners of Men, in all Ranks and Stations of Life, ſo abominably corrupt

(*a*) Gen. vi. 5, &c. (*b*) Jer. vi. 25, 26. (*c*) Mal. iii. 2, 3. (*d*) Eph. iv. 18. (*e*) Rom. i. 29, &c.

corrupt and vicious; when the *Philoſophy* of the *Gentiles* appeared to be a mere *Wiſdom of Words*, a mere ſpeculative Amuſement, and therefore very juſtly called by the *Apoſtle*, (*a*) *a vain Deceit*; when the Religion of the *Jews* was dwindled into an empty *Shew*, baſe *Diſſimulation*, and groſs *Hypocriſy*; in a word, when *Superſtition* got ground apparently, both among *Jews* and *Gentiles*, and Wickedneſs ſwept all before it, like a dire Contagion: Then was the proper Juncture for (*b*) *the Son of Righteouſneſs to ariſe with Healing in his Wings*, to diſperſe thoſe Clouds of Darkneſs, which no other Power, but his, could do, and to diſcover the *Path of Life*, which, as yet, lay hid in the *Valley of the Shadow of Death*.

And ſome Circumſtances in the World, that made it proper *for Chriſt to come at* that Time.

BUT, beſides the *ruinous* State of Religion, both among *Jews* and *Gentiles*, that call'd loudly for a *Reformation*, there was a *Combination* of Circumſtances in the World, and a particular *Temper* and Diſpoſition in the Age, in which our Saviour was born, that made it, of all others, the moſt *proper* and convenient for him to appear in. The Religion, which he came to eſtabliſh, was not (like the *Jewiſh* Diſpenſation) to be *confined* to one particular Nation or People, but to be preached *every where*, to *be a Light to lighten the* Gentiles, as well as *his People* Iſrael; and therefore, beſides the univerſal *Expectation*, which the *Prophecies* concerning the *Time* of his Birth had raiſed among the *Jews*, there was a *Concurrence* of many Things, that might promote and further the *Propagation* of ſuch a Religion. (*c*) The *Romans* had conquered almoſt all the *known* Parts of the World; they had ſpread, and ſettled their *Language* among all the Nations of their Conqueſts, and made the *Communication* eaſy from one Part to another. No *Seaſon* therefore could be ſo fit for the Appearance of a *Teacher ſent from God*, as that, which open'd a Door for the Reception of his Doctrine, when ſo *large* a Part of the Earth was under one Government, and a *Correſpondence* by this Means maintain'd between very diſtant and different Countries. They had moreover improved *moral Philoſophy* to the greateſt Height, and, having formed better Notions of *God*, and his *Attributes*, than were uſual in the *idolatrous* heathen World, they were, in ſome Meaſure, prepared for the Reception of Truth, as appears very plainly from (*d*) the vaſt Number of *Proſelytes*, which, about this Time, were converted to the *Jewiſh* Religion; ſo *far converted*, as to worſhip the only true God, and obey the *moral* Law, but without obſerving the *ritual* and *ceremonial* Performances of the *Moſaick* Inſtitution. The *Jews* too, by having the *Bible*, ſome Years before the Birth of Chriſt, *tranſlated* into one of the *then* moſt known and univerſal Languages upon Earth, which was before confin'd to their own Tongue only, in ſome meaſure pav'd the Way for the Reception of that great *Prophet*, and Saviour of Mankind, whoſe Coming was ſo plainly and ſo frequently foretold in thoſe ſacred *Oracles*, and, by being diſperſed, and carried into Captivity, the *ten Tribes* by *Shalmanezer*, and the *two remaining* Tribes by *Nebuchadnezzar*, wherever they went, they made known the Prophecies concerning their *Meſſias*, (who was to be *the Deſire of all Nations*) and thereby contributed not a little, even in the *Gentile* World, to raiſe an Expectation of him, and to prepare for his Coming.

The particular Temper *of the Age, when he came.*

HIS Coming likewiſe was *in an Age*, whoſe Hiſtory, being delivered down to us by ſome of the moſt eminent Hands that ever wrote, is more ſtudied, and better known, than that of any other Age beſides, and is, conſequently, more capable of perpetuating the Mention of the *Perſons* born in it to all ſucceeding Generations. *In an Age*, when a ſettled and univerſal *Peace* gave Men *Leiſure* and Opportunity to examine and conſider Things, and the *Learning* and *Policy*, that then prevailed, and was indeed the *Genius* of the Times, qualified them for ſuch a *Scrutiny*, and made it impoſſible for any *Impoſture* to paſs unobſerv'd, undiſcover'd, or unexpos'd: *In an Age*, when the ſeveral Sects of Philoſophers, the *Epicureans*, and the *Stoicks* more eſpecially, were in high Vogue in *Rome*, and *Athens*, and the *Scribes* and *Phariſees*, a ſubtle Generation of Men, had great Power and Authority in *Jeruſalem*, and yet were all Enemies confederate againſt any *Innovation* in Religion: And, laſtly, *in an Age*, when Vice and Immorality, (which are always an *Hindrance* to

(*a*) Col. ii. 8. (*b*) Mal. iv. 9. (*c*) *Clarke*'s Ser. Vol. II. (*d*) Vide Acts ii. 5, &c.

true Religion) were the chief Things in *Faſhion*, and yet highly incenſed againſt *Chriſtianity*, and reſolv'd to find out every little *Flaw* and Fallacy, had there been any *Inconſiſtency*, and ſeeming *Contradiction* in it, becauſe it was contrary to their Ways, their Taſtes, and Appetites, and put a Check upon all *Licentiouſneſs* of Living.

Upon the whole therefore, it ſeems to have been the Deſign of God's Providence, to have his Son born in an *Age*, when he and his Religion were ſure to be brought to the ſtricteſt Trial, and Examination; when the *Nature* of his Doctrine might be *ſcann'd* by the niceſt *Rules* of Philoſophy, and the *Credentials* of his Commiſſion *canvaſſed* by Men of Sagacity and deep Penetration, under powerful *Temptations* to find it falſe, and no ways prejudic'd in in his Favour. "Our Saviour (ſays an "ancient *Apologiſt*) did not propound his "*Scheme*, in an Age of Ignorance and "Barbarity, — but in an Age of Light and "Knowledge, for the Benefit of thoſe, "who were blinded by their own *Conceit*, "miſled by a *deluſive Light*, and deceived "by a *pompous Shew* of Delicacy and Po-"liteneſs." For (*a*) *after that* (as the Apoſtle expreſſes it) *in the Wiſdom of God, the World by Wiſdom knew not God, it pleaſed God, in the Fooliſhneſs of Preaching, to ſave them that believe.*

Thus *in the Fulneſs of Time God ſent forth his Son*, when all the *Prophecies* concerning his Coming into the World were *fulfill'd*; when other *Methods* had proved unſucceſsful, and the laſt Diſpenſation for Man's Recovery was to be made; when the *State* of Religion, in every Nation, was ſadly *corrupted*, and call'd for a *Reformation*; when the World was in Want, and a general Expectation of a Preacher ſent from God, and, by many extraordinary Circumſtances, prepared for his Reception; and when the *Inquiſition* of Learning and *(b) the Oppoſition of Science falſely ſo called*, might give a *Luſtre* to his Inſtitutions, and make the Trial of his Doctrine, *being much more precious than of Gold, that periſheth, though it be tried with Fire, be found to the Praiſe and Honour, and Glory* of that great God, by whoſe Commiſſion and Authority he came down from Heaven to publiſh it.

The particular Year and Day of Chriſt's Nativity.

In what *Year of the World*, the *Prediction*, concerning the great Event of his being born of the *holy Virgin*, was accompliſh'd, there has always been * ſome *Difference* among Chriſtians; (*c*) but, ſince it is evident from (*d*) one of the *Evangeliſts*, that he was born in the Reign of *Herod the Great*, and was but an *Infant* in the *firſt Year* of *Archelaus*, his Son, and that, according to (*e*) the Account of the other, he was *thirty Years* old in the *fifteenth* Year of *Tiberius*, the *Roman* Emperor, and during the Time that *Herod* was *Tetrarch* of *Gallilee*, the beſt (*f*) Calculation ſeems to be, — that, in the four *thouſandth Year*, from the World's Creation, the bleſſed Saviour and Redeemer of it was born, (*g*) which falls in exactly with the Time, where † a *Tradition* of the *Jews* of

(*c*) 1 Cor. i, 21. (*d*) 1 Tim. i. 20.

* The Reaſon of this *Difference* was, that the firſt Chriſtians were uſed to imitate the *Countries*, where they dwelt; and, (as the Manner was then) to reckon from the reſpective *Times* of the *Governors*, under whom they lived; and therefore, as the *Memory* of our Saviour's Birth depended on *Tradition*, it ſoon varied by different *Computations* of the Years of *Herod* and *Auguſtus*, in ſeveral Provinces, and of the different *Names* of the *Conſuls*, with which they join'd this great Event: So that, in *Jerome*'s Time, the World was divided about the true *Day*, *Month*, and *Year* of his Nativity, and there were as many different *Opinions* concerning it, as there was Variety of Traditions. In the *ſixth Century*, *Dionyſius Exiguus*, a *Scythian* by Birth, and then a *Roman Abbot*, made choice of the *worſt Opinion*, and thereupon computed, that the Time of Chriſt's Nativity happen'd ſome two or three Years *later*, than the Writers before him in the *ſecond*, or *third* Century, who lived nearer the Time, and had better Means of Information, had placed it. His *Computation* however prevailed in the *Weſtern* Parts, and found Credit among thoſe, that knew no better, till the *Reſtoration* of Learning brought in a Reformation of *Chronology*, and then it appeared that the *vulgar Æra* (as it is now call'd) began four Years after the *true* Time of our Lord's *Nativity*. But, notwithſtanding this Miſtake, it is thought proper ſtill to *continue* it, becauſe an *Alteration*, at this Time of Day, would occaſion an infinite deal of Confuſion. *Prideaux's* Connect. Part 1. in the Preface, and Bp *Chandler's* Vindic. Lib. 2.

(*a*) Bp *Chandler's* Vindicat. (*d*) Matt. ii. 1, 22. (*e*) Luke iii. 1, &c. (*f*) *Uſher's* Annals (*g*) *Prideaux's* Connect. Part 2. Lib 9.

† According to this *Tradition*, the World was to laſt *ſix thouſand* Years, of which *two thouſand* were before the Law; *two thouſand*, under the Law, and the *laſt two thouſand* were to be under the *Meſſias*. Now, if they look upon this Tradition as *authentick*, it not only proves the Time, when (according to their own Doctrine) the *Meſſias* was to come, but convicts them likewiſe of groſs *Infidelity*, foraſmuch as Chriſt having been born in the *four thouſandth* Year of the *Creation*, from which, (according to this *Tradition*) the Time of his Appearance was to begin, they have now ſuffer'd above *ſeventeen hundred* Years to paſs, and have not yet acknowledg'd him. *Prideaux's* Connect. Part 2. Lib. 9.

of no ſmall *Antiquity*, and ſtill retain'd in great *Veneration*, places the *Beginning* of the Days of the *Meſſias*; and as to the *Month* and *Day*, whereon it happen'd, tho' there was at firſt ſome Variation in the Computation of the * *Eaſtern* and *Weſtern* Churches, yet they came in time to ſettle it *on the Eighth of the Kalends of January*, which is the ſame with the *twenty-fifth of December*, the Day whereon we have all along obſerved it.

How long it has been obſerv'd.

How long it has been obſerved in the Chriſtian Church, the Writers of its Antiquities here differ again. Some carry its *Original* as high as the Age of the Apoſtles; others, though they account it a Day of great Antiquity, and long Continuance, yet can find no Footſteps of it ſooner, than the *ſecond Century*, but all agree, that it was religiouſly kept before the Time of *Conſtantine*, for which they alledge this melancholy Story, — (*a*) "That, when the Perſe-"cution raged under *Diocleſian* at *Nicome-*"*dia*, among other Acts of barbarous "Cruelty done there, finding Multitudes "of Chriſtians, young and old, met to-"gether in the Church upon the Day of "Chriſt's *Nativity* to celebrate that *Feſti-*"*val*, he commanded the Church Doors "to be ſhut up, and Fire to be put to it, "which in a ſhort Time reduced them and "the Church to Aſhes."

And how religiouſly.

THIS *Feſtival* indeed, from the firſt Inſtitution of it, was always held in great Eſtimation. By ſome of the Ancients it is ſtiled the *Feſtival of the World's Salvation*, the *Mother of other Feſtivals*, and the moſt *venerable* and † *tremendous* of them all; and therefore no Doubt is to be made, but that it was all along kept with the moſt religious *Obſervation*. To this Purpoſe (*b*) we are told, that, on this Day, all *Faſting* was prohibited as ſtrictly, as on the *Sabbath*; that Liberty was granted to *Servants* to reſt from their ordinary Labour; that all People were obliged to frequent religious Aſſemblies in their own Churches, where (*preparatory* Sermons being preached the Week before) the publick Worſhip was performed with the greateſt *Solemnity*, the Mercies of the Day commemorated with a chearful *Alacrity* of Mind, the whole Service crown'd with a thankful Communion in the bleſſed *Euchariſt*, and the Remainder of the Day ſpent in reading the divine Law, and in ſuch good Diſcourſes, and heavenly Meditations, as were proper, and agreeable to the ſacred Feſtival.

THIS, I think, may be ſufficient for the Expoſition of the *third Article* of our *Creed*, *viz.* that *Jeſus Chriſt was conceived by the Holy Ghoſt, and born of the Virgin Mary*: Wherein we profeſs moſt firmly to believe, "That God the Son, "the ſecond Perſon in the ever-bleſſed "Trinity, according to the Promiſes made "by the Prophets, in the *Fulneſs of Time*, "determined by infinite Wiſdom, aſſum'd "our *whole human* Nature, (a *Body* ſub-"ject to the ſame *Infirmities*, and a *Soul* "endow'd of the ſame *Faculties* with ours) "into an Union with his *divine*; that, in "this Aſſumption, the *Materials* of his "Body were derived from the *Subſtance* "of his Mother, but *impregnated*, and "*ſanctified* by the *ſingular* extraordinary "Influence of the *Holy Ghoſt*, the third "Perſon in the Trinity, and by him in-"ſpired with his human Soul, ſo that two *intire*

* Some Writers are of Opinion, that the Nativity of our Saviour was always obſerved, both in the *Eaſt* and *Weſt*, on the ſame Day, *i. e.* the *twenty-fifth* of *December*: But this is a great Miſtake, for the greateſt Part of the *Eaſtern* Church, for three or four of the firſt Ages, kept it on the ſame Day, that is now called *Epiphany*, (or the *ſixth* of *January*) which denotes Chriſt's *Manifeſtation* to the World in *four* Reſpects, and were all commemorated on this Day, *viz.* his *Nativity*, or Manifeſtation of God in the Fleſh; the *Appearance* of the *Star*, which conducted the wiſe Men to Chriſt; the *Declaration* of him to be the Son of God at his *Baptiſm*; and the *Diſcovery* of his Divinity, in the firſt Miracle, that he wrought in *Cana* of *Galliee*. That this Day was kept as our Saviour's Birth Day for ſeveral Ages, in ſeveral Churches in the *Eaſt*, is evident from ſuch *Authorities*, as put the Matter beyond Diſpute. The Churches of *Antioch*, and *Syria* ſeem to be the firſt, that came into the Weſtern Obſervation, which was on the *twenty-fifth* of *December*, and from that Time, the *Nativity* and *Epiphany* were *diſtinct Feſtivals*, as appears from ſeveral *Homilies* of St. *Chryſoſtom*, where he ſpeaks of them as two diſtinct Days, which had been thought one and the ſame before. *Bingham*'s Antiq. Lib. 20. Chap. 4.

(*a*) *Cave*'s Primit. Chriſt.

† This is the Title which *Chryſoſtom* gives it, and the Reaſon he aſſigns for it is, that the *Thing*, which was done on this Day, was more *tremendous*, than any other. *For that Chriſt ſhould die*, (ſays he to his Audience) *when he was a Man, was a Thing of natural Conſequence; but that, when he was God, he ſhould be willing to be made Man, and condeſcend to humble himſelf beyond all Imagination and Conception, this is indeed wonderful, and aſtoniſhing in the higheſt Degree: For which Reaſon I love, and embrace this Day, and propound it to you, that I may make you Partakers of the ſame Inducement to love.* Hom. 31. de Bapt. Chriſti.

(*b*) *Bingham*'s Antiq. Lib 20. Chap. 4.

" *intire* Natures, the *Godhead*, and the " *Manhood*, were united, and join'd to- " gether in him, but in ſuch a Manner, " as ſtill to conſtitute but one Perſon; " and that this Perſon, being thus both " God and Man, was born in the Womb, " and brought forth into the World, by a " Woman, whoſe Name was *Mary*, a " poor Woman, a Woman of the Family " of *David*, *eſpouſed* indeed to a Man " named *Joſeph* of the ſame Lineage, but " ſtill continuing in her State of *Virginity*, " both before, and after her Delivery of " this Son, and ſo being both a *Mother* " and a *Virgin* at the ſame Time. And " the proper *Effect* of a firm Belief of all " this is, — a profound *Admiration* of the " divine *Attributes*, the Power, the Wiſ- " dom, the Juſtice, the Truth, and " Loving-kindneſs of God, all conſpicuous " in his Son's *Incarnation*; *Hymns* of " grateful Acknowledgment, and the moſt " triumphant Praiſes, for the Scheme " of Man's Salvation laid and begun in " that *myſterious* Work; a proper *Regard* " and Reverence to this *Nature* of ours, " which the *ſecond Perſon* in the glo- " rious Trinity ſo highly dignified, in af- " ſuming it into his own; a *Purification* " of our Souls and Bodies from all cor- " rupt Affections, that they may be fit " *Temples* for the *third* Perſon, by whom " our Saviour was conceived, to inhabit; " a *reverent Eſteem* for the Memory " of the *bleſſed Virgin*, who, above all " her Sex, was made choice of, and " *ſanctified* by the Holy Ghoſt, to be the " Mother of the Son of God; *Condeſcen-* " *ſion* to the meaneſt Offices for the Be- " nefit of others, ſince he, who was ſo " high by Nature, when he took upon " him to deliver Man, did not *abhor the* " *Virgin's Womb*; a *Neglect* of the Gran- " deur of this World, and all its ſplendid " *Titles*, ſince he, who knew them beſt, " when he came into it, *took upon him the* " *Form of a Servant*; an *Eſteem* for vir- " tuous and inoffenſive *Poverty*, ſince the " great Lord of the Univerſe made it his " Choice; a *Charity* extenſive to all Man- " kind, ſince *Love* was the great Motive " of his Humiliation; *Contentedneſs* in " our Condition, ſince it cannot be worſe, " or more abject, than his was; and a *pa-* " *tient Reſignation* in all our Sufferings, " ſince they can bear no Proportion to " his, (*a*) who *was in all Points tempted,* " *like as we are, yet without Sin.*

(*a*) Heb. iv. 15.

ART.

CHAP. IV. SECT. I.

ARTICLE IV.

* Suffered under Pontius Pilate.

The EXPOSITION.

Why the Creed passes immediately from Christ's Birth to his Sufferings.

AFTER the two Inſtances of our Lord's *Humiliation*, viz. his Incarnation, and his Birth, the *Creed*, (without mentioning any *intermediate* Paſſages of his Life) leads us directly to his *Paſſion*; and the Reaſon is, (*a*) becauſe, in ſo ſhort a *Compendium*, it was thought ſufficient to deſcribe him under ſuch Characters, as diſtinguiſh his *Perſon*, as involve the greateſt *Myſteries* of our Faith, point out the chief *Deſign* of his Undertaking, and the *Means* and Methods of accompliſhing it. To make him *capable* of Suffering was indeed the principal End of his *Incarnation*, and his Sufferings were the *meritorious* Cauſe of our Redemption; no Wonder then, that the Creed (leaving us to the Inſtruction of the *Goſpels*, as to the Particulars of his Doctrine, Miracles, and other Occurrences of his Life) ſhould immediately fix upon them, as moſt *neceſſary* for us to believe, and as *virtually* including all the reſt.

His Sufferings foretold.

THAT the promiſed *Meſſias*, whenever he came into the World, was *preordained* to live in a State of Suffering, before his Exaltation to the *Majeſty on high*, is evident from ſeveral Paſſages in the Old Teſtament; for ſo the Apoſtle has told us, that (*b*) *the Spirit of God, which was in the Prophets, teſtified beforehand the Sufferings of Chriſt, and the Glory that ſhould follow.* The Prophecy, given at the Time of the *Fall* concerning (*c*) *the Seed of the Woman, whoſe Heel the Serpent was to bruiſe*, was indeed then very obſcure, but has long ſince, both by † *Jews* and *Chriſtians*, been underſtood as belonging to the *Meſſias*. If then the *Seed of the Woman* denotes *Chriſt*, the Saviour of the World, and by (*d*) the *Serpent* is meant the *Devil*, who, from his Deception, and Deſtruction of our firſt Parents, under the Form of that Animal, is called the (*d*) *Father of Lies*, and a *Murtherer from the Beginning*; then muſt his *bruiſing* our Saviour's *Heel* relate to theſe Temptations, Afflictions, and Sufferings, which he, and wicked Men by his *Inſtigation*, brought upon him.

IN a Prophecy of *Daniel*, where the *Meſſias* is expreſsly named, and the preciſe Time of his coming ſtated and defined, we are told, (*f*) *that he ſhall be cut off, but not for himſelf*; which is enough to convince us, both of the State of Affliction, to which he was appointed, and of

* The Word *ſuffered*, in ancient *Creeds*, was not diſtinguiſhed from the *Crucifixion*; for in *thoſe* there is no Mention made of Chriſt's *ſuffering*, only it is ſaid, that he was *crucified under Pontius Pilate*. Nor was his *Crucifixion* diſtinguiſhed from his *Death*; for, whereas we ſay, *crucified, dead, and buried*, the Ancients only ſaid, *crucified, and buried*. This *Alteration*, or Addition ſeems to have been made, at firſt, in Oppoſition to *Menander*, and his Followers, who affirmed *that Chriſt had no ſubſtantial Fleſh, but that his Body was a mere Phantaſm, or Apparition, which was neither really born, nor truly ſuffered:* And this Alteration was afterwards confirmed, as containing a more full and clear *Repreſentation* of the Reality of his Paſſion, by ſignifying the Manner, and other Circumſtances, wherein the whole was effected. *Pearſon* and *Barrow* on the Creed, and *King*'s Hiſt. of it.

† "That this Prophecy was underſtood, by the ancient *Jewiſh* Church, to relate to the Times of the "Meſſias, may, with great Probability, be inferred from many Paſſages, but eſpecially from one in *Iſaiah*, "where, after a full Deſcription of the Kingdom of Chriſt, and the Happineſs of thoſe, who were *the Seed* "*of the bleſſed of the Lord*, the State and Condition of the wicked in that Kingdom, is thus deſcribed, in "few Words: *And Duſt ſhall be the Serpent's Meat*, Chap. lxv. 25." Which ſeems to be a plain Alluſion to the Hiſtory of the *Fall*, and to that particular Sentence, which was then paſſed upon the Serpent, *Upon thy Belly ſhalt thou go, and Duſt ſhalt thou eat all the Days of thy Life*, Gen. iii. 14. Nor did the *Jews* formerly ever deny, that the Text before us had that Reference; for both the *Jeruſalem Targum* and that of *Jonathan Ben Uziel* apply it to the Meſſias. *Sherlock* on the Uſe of Prophecy, and *Towerſon* on the Creed.

(*a*) *Barrow* on the Creed, Vol. I. (*b*) 1 Pet. i. 11. (*c*) Gen. iii. 15. (*d*) Rev. xii. 9. (*e*) John viii. 44. (*f*) Dan. ix. 26.

the *Tendency* of his Sufferings, which were not for his own, but the Benefit of others. But, of all Writers of this Kind, the *evangelical* Prophet *Iſaiah* is moſt clear and copious upon this Subject: For, in his fifty third Chapter, which the ‡ *Jews* of old always applied to the *Meſſias*, he delineates his Sufferings in ſuch lively Colours, and *full* Proportion, that they ſeem to be rather a *Narrative* of what was paſt, than a *Prediction* of what was to come. And, indeed, well may he call him (*a*) *a Man of Sorrows, and acquainted with Grief*, when he tells us, that he was not only *deſpiſed, and rejected of Men, but ſtricken, ſmitten of God, and afflicted*; when he tells us, that *he was wounded for our Tranſgreſſion, bruiſed for our Iniquities*; *chaſtiſted, tormented, oppreſſed*, and, in ſhort, employs every Word, that imports Pain and Anguiſh both in Body and Mind, to give us as full an *Idea* of the many bitter Sufferings, he was to undergo, as all his *mournful Eloquence* could produce.

That our Lord ſuffered accordingly.

In this Manner were the Sufferings of the *Meſſias* foretold; and therefore foretold, becauſe they were determined in the *divine Counſel* between the Father and the Son; and therefore determined, becauſe there was a *Covenant*, from all Eternity, made between them, wherein it was concluded, what the *latter* ſhould both *ſuffer*, and *receive*; that he ſhould *make his Soul an Offering for Sin*, or ſubmit to Death for the *Redemption* of Mankind, and, for his *Reward*, have the human Nature, which he aſſumed in order to qualify himſelf for ſuffering, go along with him, at his Aſcenſion, and (*b*) *ſit on God's Right-hand in heavenly Places*. Now, if Chriſt was *to* (*c*) *ſuffer theſe Things, and to enter into Glory*; that our bleſſed Lord has punctually *fufilled* whatever (*d*) *God before had ſhewn, by the Mouth of his Prophets, that Chriſt ſhould ſuffer*, no Man can doubt, that is any way converſant in his Hiſtory. For, "if Hunger and Thirſt, "(as (*e*) one expreſſes it) if Revilings and "Contempt, if Sorrows and Agonies, if "Stripes and Buffetings, if *Condemnation* "and *Crucifixion* be Sufferings, our Sa-"viour ſuffered: If the *Infirmities* of "Nature, if the *Weight* of our Sins, if "the *Malice* of Men, if the *Machinations* "of Satan, if the *Hand of God* could "make him ſuffer, our Saviour ſuffered: "And, if the *Annals* of Time, if the "*Writings* of his Apoſtles, if the *Death* "of his Martyrs, if the *Confeſſion* of the "*Gentiles*, if the Scoffs of the *Jews* be "Teſtimonies of any Validity, then did "our Saviour moſt undoubtedly ſuffer."

In his Temptation by the Devil.

No ſooner was he baptized (for the * Creed confines us to take Notice of the *Sufferings* only, that befel him in the Time, that *Pontius Pilate* was Governor of *Judea*) no ſooner was he baptized to prepare him for his *prophetic* Office, diſtinguiſhed by a *viſible* Deſcent of the *Holy Ghoſt* upon him, and, by an (*f*) *audible Voice from Heaven*, declared to be *the Son of God*, but the next News, that we hear of him, is, that he was *led by the Spirit*, i. e. by an *Impulſe* of the ſame Holy Ghoſt, with which *he* (*g*) *was filled, into the Wilderneſs, to be tempted by the Devil.* Why the Son of God *ſubmitted* himſelf to be tempted by the Devil, and upon what *Preſumption* the Devil could promiſe himſelf any *Succeſs* in that Undertaking, are *Queſtions*, that will naturally fall in, as we go along; at preſent we need only obſerve, —that the Devil, in his *firſt* Attempt, takes Occaſion from his *Hunger* to perſuade him to work a Miracle, in order to ſatisfy it; (*h*) *If thou be the Son of God, command theſe Stones to be made Bread:* But for this there was no Neceſſity (as our

‡ To this Purpoſe we find two of their greateſt Doctors, *Solomon Jarchi*, and *Moſes Alſhech* acknowledging, that their ancient *Rabbins*, as they had received it from their Anceſtors, did always interpret this Chapter of the *Meſſias*. *Pearſon* on the Creed.

* In the *fifteenth* Year of *Tiberius* (reckoning from the Time, that he was admitted to reign in *Copartnerſhip* with *Auguſtus*) *Valerius Gratus* was recalled, and *Pontius Pilate* was ſent Procurator of *Judea*. In this Year *John the Baptiſt* began to preach the *Baptiſm of Repentance for the Remiſſion of Sins*, Luke iii. 3. which was an *Introduction* to the Goſpel of Chriſt. He continued in his Miniſtry *three Years and an half*: but when he was *caſt into Priſon*, then our Saviour appeared, preaching his Goſpel every where. *Before*, he had lived a private Life, and his Hardſhips were no more, than what are common to Men in his Circumſtances. We muſt date the proper Commencement of his Sufferings therefore, from the *Beginning* of his Miniſtry, which was between three and four Years after *Pilate*'s Promotion to the Government of *Judea*. *Prideaux*'s Connect. Part 2. Chap. 9.

(*a*) Ver. 3, 4, 5. (*b*) Eph. i. 20. (*c*) Luke xxiv. 26. (*d*) Acts iii. 18. (*e*) *Pearſon* on the Creed. (*f*) Mat. iii. 17. (*g*) Luke iv. 1. (*h*) Mat. iv. 3.

our Saviour replies) becauſe there was no Danger of God's ſuffering his Children to want Suſtenance. He fed (*a*) the *Iſraelites* with *Manna in the Wilderneſs*; and therefore *Man does not live by Bread alone, but by every Word, that proceedeth out of the Mouth of God*, i. e. by every Thing, that God ſhall pleaſe to command to give him *Nouriſhment*: That, in his *ſecond* Attempt, having carried him through the *Air*, and ſet him on a *Pinnacle of the Temple*, he puts him upon an unneceſſary Experiment of God's preſerving Providence, (*b*) *if thou be the Son of God, caſt thyſelf down*; and colours it over with a Text of Scripture, the better to countenance his Propoſal: but to this our Saviour returns another Text, (*c*) *thou ſhalt not tempt the Lord thy God*: And that, in his *third* Attempt, having hurried him through the Air again, and (*d*) *ſet him upon an exceeding high Mountain*, he repreſents to him all the Splendor and Glory of the World, and, pretending to be the grand *Proprietor* of it, *All theſe Things will I give thee*, ſays he, *if thou wilt fall down, and worſhip me*: But this was an Offer, that our Saviour rejected with *Indignation*; and therefore, having from Scripture proved the groſs Impiety of it, he commanded the Devil to be gone: (*e*) *Get thee hence, Satan, for it is written, Thou ſhalt worſhip the Lord thy God, and him only ſhalt thou ſerve.* This powerful Command (reluctant though he was) the Devil was forced to obey; and therefore, (*f*) *for a Seaſon*, and until the Time of his *Paſſion* drew near, he *departed from him.* For, finding, that there was no Poſſibility of making any Impreſſion upon him by *Fraud*, he reſolved, for the future, to withſtand his Doctrine by Oppoſition and Force; and, becauſe there was no Room for his *Suggeſtions* to take Place, his Buſineſs was to ſtir up the Hatred of wicked (*g*) Men againſt him, and, by employing ſuch *Inſtruments*, to make him endure (*h*) a *daily Contradiction of Sinners againſt himſelf.* And indeed to what elſe can we impute the barbarous treatment of his own *Countrymen*, to whom he made the firſt *Tender* of his Goſpel, their upbraiding him with the Poverty of his *Parentage*, and the Meanneſs of his *Education*, and taking ſuch Offence at the *Freedom* of his Preaching, as to (*i*) *thruſt him out of the City, and to lead him unto the Brow of the Hill, whereon it was built, that they might* thence *caſt him down headlong?* To what elſe, the unkind Reception, that his own *Relations* gave him, even when he fled to them for Shelter from Perſecution, and the Deſire they expreſſed to get rid of his Company; (*k*) *Depart from hence, and go into* Judea, *and ſhew thyſelf to the World*; becauſe, the *Evangeliſt* obſerves, that *neither did his Brethren believe in him?* To what elſe, the violent Rage, that the *Jews* were in upon his declaring himſelf to be the Son of God, though he appeals to the Miracles he did, in Teſtimony of the Truth of his Pretenſions; and their (*l*) *taking up Stones, to ſtone him*, had he not both mollified their Fury with this ſoft Remonſtrance, *Many good Works have I ſhewn you from my Father, for which of theſe Works do ye ſtone me?* and miraculouſly *made his Eſcape out of their Hands?* To what elſe, that black Deſign of the *chief Prieſts* (*m*) to murther *Lazarus*, only becauſe our Lord had raiſed him from the dead, and that, by Reaſon of him, many of the *Jews went away and believed on him?* And to what elſe, that mean and pitiful Revenge of *excommunicating* the poor blind Man, merely for *avowing* the Miracle, that Chriſt had done on him, and for aſſerting, in his Favour, that, (*n*) *ſince the World began, was it not heard, that any Man opened the Eyes of one, that was born blind?* Add to all this, the People's harden'd Ingratitude for all the wonderful Mercies, that he had extended to them; the *Phariſees laying Snares* for him in their Talk, *that they might have whereof to accuſe him*; the *Rulers*, upon all Occaſions, conſpiring, and plotting together againſt him, *how they might take away his Life*; and all *Orders* and *Degrees* among them treating him with Scorn, and Contempt, and Reproach, with opprobrious Names and Terms of high Diſdain; and then it will appear, that Men, though bad in themſelves, could never have been ſo *abominably* wicked, and inhumane, had they not been *inſtigated* by the Power of the Devil, enraged and exaſperated, that his own Temptations had no better Succeſs.

And by his Inſtruments.

OUR

(*a*) Matt. iv. 4. Deut. viii. 3. *Whitby*'s Annot. *in locum.* (*b*) Matt. iv. 6. (*c*) Deut. vi. 16. (*d*) Matt. iv. 8, 9. (*e*) Matt. iv. 10. and Deut. vi. 13. (*f*) Luke iv. 13. (*g*) John xiv. 30. and Luke xxii. 53. (*h*) Heb. xii. 3. (*i*) Luke iv. 29, 30. (*k*) John vii. 3, &c. (*l*) John x. 31, &c. (*m*) John xii. 10, 11. (*n*) John ix. 32.

OUR Lord's *Converſation* was entirely *innocent*, and irreproveable; and yet, for his very *Courteſy* and *Condeſcenſion*, he is branded with the odious Names of *Glutton* and *Winebiber*, *a Friend of Publicans and Sinners*. His *Submiſſion* to the *civil* Power was ſuch, that he even (*a*) put himſelf to the Expence of a Miracle in order to pay the *Tribute*; and yet he is repreſented as (*b*) a *Perverter* of the People, a *Mover of Sedition*, and one, (*c*) that went about to make *himſelf a King*. His *Doctrine* was *Wiſdom from above*, grounded upon former *Revelations*, and confirmed by a Multitude of Miracles; and yet he was reputed a (*d*) *Madman*, not worth *hearing*, a Deceiver, an Impoſtor; and, (*e*) *Have any of the Rulers or Phariſees believed on him?* was thought a ſufficient Confutation of all, he had to ſay. His *Miracles* were ſuch, as never Man did, ſuch, as abundantly teſtified the Divinity and Majeſty of him, that wrought them; and yet they were looked upon as the Effects of *magical* Skill, and (*f*) his *diſpoſſeſſing* leſſer Devils is ſaid to proceed from the Power of him, who was the Chief, or Prince among them. In a Word, the Indignities and Injuries, the Affronts and Ignominies, the Reproaches, and Sufferings of this Kind, which, to an ingenuous Mind, are grating enough, in the Courſe of his Miniſtry, were innumerable, and to any, but him, inſupportable; but theſe were but the *Beginning of Sorrows*.

And before his Crucifixion.

TO have his Blood ſet to Sale at a Price, and that but a very low and poor one too; that Blood, which was a Purchaſe more than equivalent for the whole World, rated at *thirty Pieces of Silver*, which, in our Money, is no more than *three Pounds and fifteen Shillings*: To bear the Part, which he was forced to ſuſtain, in that *tragical Scene* of the Garden; thoſe *Tortures* of Body, *Terrors* of Mind, and *Agonies* of Soul, which cauſed a *bloody Sweat*, and put him upon a vehement Importunity, that the *Bitterneſs of the Cup*, he was then about to drink, might, *if poſſible*, be removed from him: To be betrayed, and ſold by one of his own Servants, honoured with the Dignity of an *Apoſtle*, with the Power of working Miracles, with a Commiſſion to preach the Goſpel, and (to free him from the Temptation of baſe Avarice) entruſted with the *Bag*, and made Diſtributer of his Maſter's Stores: To be aſſaulted with *Swords* and *Staves*, and apprehended as a common *Robber*, and Peſt of Mankind: To be haled from one High-prieſt to another, and there blindfolded, ſpit upon, buffeted, and inſulted: To be expoſed to the *mercenary* Tongues of falſe Witneſſes, and, in the midſt of all this Diſtreſs, left all alone; not one Friend, not one Diſciple to ſtand by him; but forſaken by the *reſt*, and ſolemnly denied and abjured by the *Chief* of them: To be dragged from one *Judgment-ſeat* to another, and, when neither *Herod* nor *Pilate* could find any Fault in him, to have an unjuſt Sentence of Death pronounced againſt him by that very Mouth, which had thrice atteſted, and proclaimed his Innocence: To have a known *Robber* and Murderer, one, who ſtood convicted for *Sedition and Blood*, preferred before him, and, even after Condemnation, to be made the *Object* of Inſult and Barbarity: To be arrayed in a *Purple Robe*, have a *mock* Crown and Scepter given him, and Obeiſance paid to him in *Jeſt* and Wantonneſs, that he might be the *Gazing* and the *Laughing-ſtock* of the Beholders: To be firſt ſcourged, and then dreſſed in a *royal Robe*; this Moment ſaluted as a *King*, and the next *ſpit upon* as ſomething loathſome; now the *Knee* bowed before him, and immediately the Scepter broke about his Head, to render him more ridiculous and contemptible; and, after all this barbarous *Farce*, and Triumph in his Miſery, to be given up to the Mercy of the rude Rabble, and compelled to bear his own Croſs, till, by the Loſs of Blood and Spirits, under ſuch a long Variety of Sufferings, he fainted, and ſunk under it: Theſe, though but the *Preface* to his Crucifixion, are all of them Circumſtances of ſuch Horror, Inſolence, and Cruelty, as never met together before. And, if to theſe we add, that the Perſon, who endured them, was one of inconceiveable Worth and Dignity, who made it the whole Buſineſs, and indeed the Pleaſure of his Life, to *go about doing Good*; and to whom the *Multitude* gave Teſtimony, that (*g*) *he had done all Things well*: One, who was entirely innocent of what was laid to

(*a*) Matt. xvii. 24. (*b*) Luke xxiii. 14. (*c*) xxiii. 2. (*d*) John x. 20. (*e*) vii. 48.
(*f*) Matt. ix. 34. (*g*) Mark vii. 37.

to his Charge, whom his *Judge*, after the ſtricteſt Examination, declared to be guiltleſs, and the *Centurion* pronounced (*a*) *to be a righteous Man*; one, laſtly, who, notwithſtanding a Conſciouſneſs of his Greatneſs, his Goodneſs, and his Innocence, ſubmitted to whatever was laid upon him, without murmuring, and (to verify the Prediction concerning him) (*b*) *was brought as a Lamb to the Slaughter, and as a Sheep before her Shearers is dumb, ſo he opened not his Mouth:* If we take all theſe Conſiderations together, I ſay, they make his Caſe without a *Parallel*, his Sufferings beyond Example, and the Wickedneſs of thoſe, who were the Actors and Inſtruments in them, deteſtable beyond *Expreſſion*.

The Office and Character of Pilate.

FOR this Reaſon ſo infamous a Name, as that of *Pontius Pilate*, had never been * recorded in our Creed, had it not been to aſcertain the *Time*, the *Place*, and the *Manner* of our Saviour's Death, by enquiring (if Occaſion were) into the *Character* and *Office*, which the Perſon, there mentioned, bore. *Pontius Pilate* was, by Birth, a *Roman*, of an ancient Family, and of the Equeſtrian Order. He was made by *Tiberius Cæſar*, in the *twelfth* Year of his Reign, the *Procurator* of *Judæa*, whoſe Office it was to take Care of the *Imperial Revenues* in that Diſtrict. The *Power of the Sword* belonged properly to the *Preſident* of *Syria*, of which Province *Judæa* was but a Part; but, becauſe the *Jews* were always looked upon as a People inclinable to Rebellion againſt the *Romans*, the Trial and Sentence of Criminals, of † *State Criminals* more eſpecially, was lodged in the Breaſt of the *Procurator*, who, in this Reſpect, was an *abſolute* Governor. *Pilate* indeed was a very rigid and ſevere Governor, he had done many cruel and arbitrary Things to the *Jews*, for which they had accuſed him at *Rome*, and now, upon our Saviour's Arraignment, threaten'd him with an *Impeachment* of Diſloyalty againſt *Cæſar*, if he did not condemn him; and this was the true Reaſon, that he yielded to their Importunity, and ſacrificed *known* Innocence to his own ‡ *private* Intereſt, and their *implacable* Malice.

(*a*) Luke xxiii. 47. (*b*) Iſai. liii. 7.

* This is the Obſervation of *Ruffinus*, that *the Framers of the Creed have moſt cautiouſly mentioned the* Time *of the Paſſion, that it was under* Pontius Pilate, *leſt, in any Manner of Way, it ſhould be a wandering and uncertain Tale.* — And indeed the *ſollicitous* Exactneſs of the *ancient* Churches is very remarkable herein, ſince there is ſcarce any Creed extant, wherein our Saviour's *Sufferings* are not expreſly mentioned to have been under *Pontius Pilate*, i. e. at the Time, when *Pontius Pilate* was *Procurator*, or Governor of *Judæa*. And in this the Creed obſerves the Manner of *Calculation* then in Uſe. For, as in thoſe Days they made their *Computations* by their Governors, and referred their *hiſtorical* Events to the reſpective Time of the Government; ſo the *Paſſion* of our Saviour is here referred to the Government of *Pontius Pilate*. *King*'s Hiſt. of the Creed.

† Whether the *Jews*, at this Time, had, in all Caſes, the Power of Life and Death, or that their *Courts* were deprived of that Privilege by the *Romans*, is a Matter of great Debate among the learned. If we may be determined by the *Jews* themſelves, we find *Maimonides*, and both the *Talmuds*, affirming, that the *Criminal Courts*, i. e. thoſe of Life and Death, were taken away, and ceaſed among the *Jews*, *forty Years* before the Deſtruction of the *ſecond Temple*. The *Jews* indeed, at this Time, tell *Pilate* concerning our Saviour, that *they had a Law, by which he ought to die*, John xix. 7. and *Pilate* gave them Leave to *judge him according to their Law*, John xviii. 31. but, notwithſtanding this, it is highly probable, that they could not inflict *capital* Puniſhment on him. They might *try* and judge him according to a Law of their own, but, for all that, they had not Power to ſign his *Execution*. It is allowed indeed, that they condemned *Stephen* to be *ſtoned*, and ſtoned him without aſking Leave of the *Roman* Magiſtrates: And therefore the true *Deciſion* of the Controverſy I take to be this —— that the *Romans* had taken from the *Sanhedrim* the Power of *capital* Puniſhments, as to thoſe *Crimes*, which related to the *Roman* Laws, *viz.* Robbery, Murder, Treaſon, and ſuch *political* Matters, as concerned the Empire. In theſe the *Jews* could do nothing: But, as to the Breach of *Moſes*'s Law, in the Caſe of Blaſphemy, Diſobedience to Parents, *&c.* they had Power to condemn, and to puniſh with Death. When therefore they accuſed Chriſt both of High Treaſon, and Blaſphemy, they were forced to crave the Aſſiſtance of the *ſecular* Powers, and, accordingly, repaired to *Pilate*, who had a *Right* of inflicting *capital* Puniſhment in ſuch a *complex* Caſe, as that was. *Edwards*'s Body, Vol. I.

‡ It muſt be obſerved however in his Favour, that, in Compariſon of the *Jews*, he behaved with ſome *Moderation*, and Ingenuity. He was ſo *fair* in Examination of the Caſe, as, notwithſtanding their *eager* and clamorous Proſecution, to diſcern the Right, and to declare our Saviour *guiltleſs*. He was ſo far conſtant and true to his Conſcience, as to expoſtulate with them, and, by his three Times challenging them, *Why, what Evil hath he done?* Luke xxiii. 22. ſufficiently diſcovered his Readineſs to acquit him; but he had not the *Heart*, or the Honeſty, thoroughly to reſiſt their Importunities. They were more obſtinate in their *wicked* Deſigns, than he reſolute in his *good* Purpoſes; ſo that, partly out of Fear to offend them,

and

If by his Name *was inſerted in the Creed.*

Now, ſince it was a known Thing, that *Pilate*, at that Time, was Governor of *Judæa*; that his Tribunal of Juſtice was in the Mother City of *Jeruſalem*, and, the *Scepter being departed* from the *Jews*, the Power of Life and Death, in Offences againſt the *State*, was properly veſted in him; ſo that our Saviour, by his Sentence, was condemned to die, not in a *Jewiſh*, but in a *Roman* Manner; it was requiſite, that theſe Things ſhould be kept in perpetual Remembrance, that Men might * not fluctuate, but have a certain Period of Time fixed, whereunto to direct their Enquiries; and, becauſe the Way of Computation then was not by the *Date of the Year*, as it is now, but by the *Name* of the *Roman* Governor, whoever it was, the Name of *Pilate* was neceſſary to be inſerted in the Creed, that it might never be forgotten *when*, and *where*, and *how*, our bleſſed Saviour ſuffered and died.

The Wiſdom *of Providence herein.*

And here we cannot but admire the wiſe Diſpoſition of Providence, in ordering Matters ſo, that, as Chriſt was to ſuffer at *Jeruſalem*, on Account of his more immediate *Miſſion* to the Houſe of *Iſrael*, ſo he ſhould ſuffer under a *Roman* Governor, who was obliged to give an Account of the moſt remarkable Events, that might happen during his Adminiſtration, to the Emperor at *Rome*; by which Means all Men had a fair Opportunity of examining the *Evidences* of a *Fact*, which every one was concerned to know, and which, in the Time of *Tertullian* (as appears by his frequent Appeals to them) were extant in the † *publick Records* of the Empire. Nor can we but admire, again, the Wiſdom of the ſame Providence, in appointing this Governor, upon our Saviour's Arraignment, to be his Judge. For had the Power of judging him been veſted in the *Jews*, his Innocence could not have been cleared up ſo well, ſince none knows what Crimes they might have alledged againſt him, and upon what pretended Evidence: But now, by the whole *Proceſs* of his Trial it appears, that the Accuſations againſt him were frivolous; that the *Evidences* were ſuborned, and inconſiſtent; that the Judge declared openly, *he could find no Fault in him*; that he laboured ſtrenuouſly to acquit him; and that the Sentence againſt him (according to his own Acknowledgment) was unjuſt, and extorted from him by Menaces. *If thou let this Man go, thou art not* Cæſar's *Friend.* This was the People's Threat, and the Fear of *Cæſar*'s Diſpleaſure was more prevalent with him, than the Love of Juſtice; but in vain did he *waſh his Hands*, ſince, in ſigning our Saviour's Execution, he imbrewed them in *the Blood of the Lamb of God.*

The

and partly out of Favour to oblige them (thoſe two great *Corrupters* of human Judgment) he yielded to them, and ſuffered himſelf to be overborn by their Sollicitations. But herein he ſerved the divine Providence; for though he took away his *Life*, he cleared his *Reputation*, and in condemning him, condemned *himſelf*, the corrupt *Judge*, and the *Jews*, his malicious *Accuſers*. *Barrow*'s Ser. on the Creed, Vol. II.

* It is obſerved of the *early* Enemies of Chriſtianity, that they firſt began to *unſettle* the Time of our Saviour's Paſſion, that thereby they might, at laſt, deny the *Paſſion* itſelf: That, to this Purpoſe, ſome would have it on the *ſeventh Year* of the Reign of *Tiberius*, though *Pontius Pilate* was not then *Procurator* of *Judæa*, nor was our Saviour baptized, till eight Years after that Time, *Luke* iii. 1. The *Jews*, leſt the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem* might ſeem to be a Puniſhment, ſent from Heaven, for their *Crucifixion* of *Jeſus*, have removed his Death near *threeſcore* Years more backward ſtill, placing it in the Beginning of *Herod*'s Reign, though he was not born till towards the *Concluſion* of it; nay ſome have removed it near *twenty Years* farther yet, telling us, that he died under *Ariſtobulus*, above *fifty Years* before he was born. As therefore they deny the *Time* of our Saviour's Paſſion, with a Deſign to deſtroy his *Doctrine*; ſo ſhould we, in order to eſtabliſh the Subſtance of the Goſpel, depending on his Death, endeavour to retain a perfect Remembrance of the Time, in which he died. *Pearſon* on the Creed.

† Theſe Records were of two Kinds: either *Expreſſes*, ſent to the Emperor, or *Annals*, kept by the Governor, of the moſt ſignal Occurrences during his Adminiſtration. That it was a general *Cuſtom*, for all Governors of Provinces, to give the Emperor an Account of all ſuch Paſſages, as were moſt remarkable; and that *Pontius Pilate* wrote unto *Tiberius* an Account of the Death and Reſurrection of our Saviour, whom that Emperor recommended to the *Senate*, to be admitted into the *Number* of their Gods, is teſtified by *Tertullian*, who, of all Author's in his Time, was beſt acquainted with the *Roman* Hiſtory. But, beſides this, as it was uſual for *Governors*, in their *Provinces*, to take Care, that all Things, worthy of *Remark*, ſhould be written in *publick Tables*, and preſerved, as the *Acts* of their Government, ſo *Pontius Pilate* kept *Memoirs* of the *Jewiſh* Affairs (which were therefore called *the Acts of Pilate*) in which an Account was given of our bleſſed Saviour; and to theſe the *primitive* Chriſtians did appeal in their Diſputes with the *Gentiles*, as to a moſt undoubted Teſtimony. *Pearſon* in the Notes.

The OBJECTION.

" OF a Truth *againſt thy holy Child*
" *Jeſus*, ſays the (*a*) *apoſtolick*
" Prayer, *whom thou haſt anointed, both*
" Herod *and* Pontius Pilate, *with the Gen-*
" *tiles, and the People of* Iſrael, *were ga-*
" *thered together, for to do whatever thy*
" *Hand and thy Counſel determined before*
" *to be done:* But, if whatever *Herod*
" and *Pontius Pilate* did againſt our Lord
" was *foreknown, foretold*, and *determined*
" by the *Counſel* of God, we cannot ſee
" how they can be accounted ſo highly
" *culpable*, in being *ſubſervient* to the *Will*
" of the Almighty, and in acting no other
" Things, than what the *Fate* of a Decree
" made neceſſary to come to paſs. Nay
" the Fact of *Judas*, if it was neceſſitated
" by the Force of an *irreſiſtible* Decree
" (as it muſt have been, ſince it was *fore-*
" *ſeen*, and *fore-ordained* by the Provi-
" dence of God) could not have in it ſuch
" a *Complication* of Wickedneſs, as we
" may imagine: For, if he was under a
" *Fatality* of acting as he did, he had no
" *Freedom* of Will, and where there is no
" Freedom of Will, there cannot be much
" Guilt. Of the two, indeed, St. *Peter*,
" in his Behaviour, ſeems to be more cri-
" minal. He had been let into his Ma-
" ſter's *Privacies*, ſeen his *Tranſfiguration*
" on the Mount, made publick Profeſſion
" of his *Divinity*, and promiſed to ſacri-
" fice his Life in his Service, which the
" other never did; and yet, upon the Ac-
" cuſation of a poor Servant *Wench*, he
" ſhamefully denies, renounces, and ab-
" jures him; and was not this *equivalent*
" to the other's *betraying* him? How
" came it then to paſs, that the one was
" *admitted* to Mercy, and the other not,
" though both are ſaid to *repent*, if there
" was not ſome *Fatality* in all this?
" Wicked indeed were the *Inſtruments* on
" all Sides, that were employed againſt
" the holy *Jeſus*, but why did God Al-
" mighty *ſubmit* his Son to ſuch barbarous
" Treatment? Or, for what Reaſons did
" his Son *voluntarily* chooſe it, when he
" might have reſcued himſelf by a Word's
" ſpeaking? Was there no other Me-
" thod of redeeming loſt Mankind, than
" by thus inſulting, *wounding*, and bruiſ-
" ing the *Lord of Life* and Glory?
" The Malice of the *Scribes* and *Phari-*
" *ſees*, and the Rage of the Rulers, againſt
" the Lord's Anointed, was furious in-
" deed, and incenſed to an high Degree;
" but for this we may, in ſome Meaſure,
" account from the *Severity* of his Re-
" proofs, deſtitute of the *Spirit of Meek-*
" *neſs*, and thoſe frequent Denunciations
" of *Woes* againſt them, deſigned, one
" would think, not ſo much to *reform*,
" as to *exaſperate*, and to provoke them
" to do, what God, (*b*) by *his determinate*
" *Counſel and Foreknowledge*, intended that
" they ſhould do. Reſtleſs, without doubt,
" were the Contrivances of the Devil, to
" oppoſe our Lord privately, and, by the
" Help of wicked Men, his *Inſtruments*,
" to obſtruct the Progreſs of his Doctrine;
" but, when he had heard him declared
" from Heaven to be the *Son of God*, to
" ſet upon him then, and aſſault him
" openly, and continue his Aſſaults (as
" one of the (*c*) Evangeliſts tells us) for
" the *Space of forty Days together*, is a lit-
" tle too fool-hardy. He is called, in-
" deed, the (*d*) *Prince of the Power of*
" *the Air*, and in that *Element* having
" ſome Dominion, might perhaps convey
" our Saviour through it, and ſet him up-
" on the *Battlement* of the Temple, but
" how he could ſhew him (unleſs it were
" in a *Dream*, or a *Viſion*) *all the King-*
" *doms of the World, and the Glory of them*,
" i. e. the ſtately *Edifices*, ſplendid *Attire*,
" glittering *Coaches*, *Guards*, and *Attend-*
" *ants*, &c. of all the Princes in the Uni-
" verſe, or, of what Advantage to ſuch a
" Proſpect the *Elevation* of any Place
" would be, we cannot imagine; much
" leſs can we conceive, what poſſible De-
" ſign, or Expectation of Succeſs, the De-
" vil could have in his Temptation of our
" Lord. He certainly could not think of
" defeating the *Counſel* of God, or of diſ-
" appointing his Purpoſe of ſending his
" Son into the World; and, as he was
" the Son of God, he could not but be
" ſenſible, that all Attempts upon him
" would be vain. *Impaſſibility* is a known
" Attribute of the Godhead; ſo that the
" divine Nature in Chriſt could not *ſuffer*
" by

(*a*) Acts iv. 27, 28. (*b*) Acts ii. 23. (*c*) Luke iv. 2. (*d*) Eph. ii. 2.

" by any kind of Violence; and yet, without
" its *participating* in ſome manner or
" other in his Sufferings, they could have
" been of no *meritorious* Efficacy (the
" Sufferings of a mere Man availing no-
" thing) towards the *Expiation* of human
" Guilt, and therefore the great Difficulty
" is——How the Paſſion of the Son of
" God, who, as ſuch, is incapable of ſuf-
" fering, could become a *Propitiation* for
" our Sins?

Anſwered by ſhewing, the Nature of God's Foreknowledge.

How God's *Foreknowledge* of all human Actions is conſiſtent with the *Freedom* of Man's Will, is a Queſtion of ſome Difficulty, and what has occaſioned groſs Miſtakes. For, (*a*) whereas ſome conſidering, that, without the *Liberty of the Will*, there could be no Religion, no Virtue or Vice, no Rewards or Puniſhments, for fear of impairing this Liberty, have *intrenched* upon the *Attributes* of God, by denying, or ſeeming to deny his Preſcience of future and free Events; others, on the contrary, intent upon *magnifying* the Glory of the divine Perfections, have affirmed, that all human Actions are *neceſſary*, and determined abſolutely by a Chain of certain and unavoidable Cauſes; and, by this Means, making Man a mere *Machine* and incapable of all *Morality*, they have been ſometimes puzzled to clear God from the Imputation of his Tranſgreſſions. But now,

Its Conſiſtency *with the* Freedom *of Man.*

as both the *Foreknowledge* of God, and the Liberty of Man, are Truths inconteſtible, it muſt follow unavoidably, that the Foreknowledge of God is of ſuch a Nature, as not to be inconſiſtent with the Liberty of Man, *i. e.* God can certainly foreſee, how any *free* Agent, endowed with ſuch Paſſions and Affections, will *determine* itſelf upon ſuch a Conjuncture, without having any Influence, or giving any Biaſs to his Determination; even as a Man of long Experience, and Obſervation, though he has no Concern with another Perſon's Actions, ſhall, with great Probability of Truth, prognoſticate how *that other*, whoſe Temper and Diſpoſition he is thoroughly acquainted with, in ſuch and ſuch Circumſtances will behave. And how much more reaſonable is it then to ſuppoſe, that God, without influencing Men's Wills by his *Power*, may, by his *Foreſight*, have a much certainer Knowledge of future free Events, than either Men or Angels can have, as the Perfections of his Nature are infinitely ſuperior to theirs?

THE ſhort of the Matter is this——As God has an intimate Knowledge of the State of our Souls, of all the *Affections* and *Paſſions*, *Springs* and *Weights*, wherewith they are moved, he knows infallibly how every poſſible *Object*, that preſents itſelf, will determine our *Judgments* and *Choices*, though he himſelf does not determine them at all; " (*b*) even as the Man, that
" ſees the ſetting of the *Chimes*, can tell,
" ſeveral Hours before, what Tune they
" will play, without any *poſitive* Influ-
" ence, either upon their ſetting, or their
" playing."

Herod, Pilate, *and* Judas *wicked* Inſtruments, *but* free Agents.

HEROD ANTIPAS was a very wicked and bloody Prince. He, in Gratification of an *inceſtuous* Woman, his Brother *Philip*'s Wife, with whom he lived, and, in Performance of a raſh Promiſe made to a little *dancing* Girl, ordered * the Head of *John the Baptiſt* to be cut off; and, as he was a mere *Libertine* in his Manner of Life, he was a proper Perſon, to inſult our Lord in his Afflictions, to (*c*) ſet him at nought *with his Men of War*, and, having *mocked* and made Sport with him, till he was weary, to *array him* with a *gorgeous Robe*, and ſo, in Deriſion, ſend him back again to *Pilate*. *Pilate* was a Man of as bad a Character. In his Government of *Judæa*

* Here we may obſerve, that very *remarkable* was the Providence of God, in avenging the Death of this holy Man on the *three* Perſons, principally concerned in it. For, 1. as the War between *Herod* and *Aretas*, King of *Petræa*, was cauſed by *Herod*'s wicked Contract with *Herodias*, to reject the Daughter of *Aretas*, his lawful Wife, and to marry this *Herodias*, his *Brother* Philip's *Wife*; ſo *Joſephus* declares, that the *Jews* looked upon his putting *John* to Death, as the Cauſe of the Miſcarriage of his Army; *God very juſtly puniſhing him for the Death of* John the Baptiſt. *Antiq. l.* 18. 2. This *Herodias*, envying the Glory of *Agrippa*, who was honoured with the Title of *King* by *Caligula*, prevailed with her Huſband to go to *Rome*, and accuſe *Agrippa*. Whereupon *Caligula*, depriving *Herod* of his Government, and her of her Money, gave both to *Agrippa*, and baniſhed them both to *Lyons* in *France*, *which*, according to *Joſephus*, *was done in Puniſhment of her Envy*, *and of his Readineſs to hearken to her Sollicitations*, Antiq. l. 9. 3. Of this *Daughter* of hers it is reported, that, as ſhe was going over the *Ice* in Winter, the Ice brake, and, ſhe ſlipping in to the Head, the Ice came together again, and ſevered her Head from her Body; which (if it be true) is a wonderful *Inſtance* of God's juſt *Providence*, in puniſhing her with the Loſs of her Head, for deſiring that of the *Baptiſt* to be given her. *Whitby*'s Annot.

(*a*) *Clarke*'s Ser. (*b*) *Young*'s Ser. Vol. I. (*c*) Luke xxiii. 11.

Judæa we are told, that (*a*) he uſed to ſell Juſtice, and give any Sentence for Money; that he was * guilty of Rapins, of Oppreſſions, of Murders, of putting Men † *arbitrarily* to Death, without any Proceſs, and of exceſſive *Cruelty* through his whole Adminiſtration; and was therefore a Man fit to be wrought upon, by the Clamours of the People, and the Management of the Rulers, to give that unjuſt Sentence, whereby he condemned to Death him, that was *the Lord of Life*. *Judas*, before he was taken into the Number of the Apoſtles, was of a wretched covetous Diſpoſition, and for this Reaſon choſe the Office of *having the Bag*. On one particular Occaſion, when *Mary* had anointed our Saviour's Feet with a Pound of *very coſtly Spikenard*, we find him diſcovering his Temper, and murmuring, *why was not this Ointment ſold for three hundred Pence, and given to the Poor?* Whereupon the Evangeliſt's Obſervation is——(*b*) *this he ſaid, not that he cared for the Poor, but becauſe he was a Thief, and had the Bag*, and was therefore a Creature capable of ſelling his Maſter's Life at any Rate. Thus God, having ordained that Chriſt ſhould ſuffer for the Sins of Men, made Choice of different Perſons, but all wicked in their Way, to betray, inſult, and condemn him; becauſe he foreſaw, that, following the Bent of their own Inclinations, they would naturally be prompted ſo to do, without any Direction or Influence from him: Nor can there, in this whole Procedure (which was indeed nothing but permitting their Tempers to have their proper Operations) any culpable Imputation fall upon God; his Fore-knowledge, in this Caſe, is only to be conſidered as an Act of *ſimple Intelligence*, which no more affects the Things he foreknows will happen, than his After-knowledge affects what has already happened, but rather ſuppoſes, in the *Order* of our Ideas, the good or ill Uſe of human Liberty, antecedent to his Fore-knowledge. Though therefore he foreknew what theſe People would certainly do, and that ſuch *Principles* in them would neceſſarily produce ſuch Effects, yet did this Foreknowledge lay no Force or Conſtraint upon them to be ſo wicked; that was entirely their own *Choice*, and conſequently their own *Guilt*. For let us ſuppoſe (as (*c*) one argues upon this Subject) that a Man hath forfeited his Life, or all the Comforts of it, to Providence, (as our Saviour certainly did, when he engaged to ſtand in the Stead of ſinful Man) and that God is minded to take Advantage of the *Forfeiture*, to remove him out of the World, or to reduce him to Poverty, and all Kinds of Miſery; is it any Fault of *Providence*, to deliver ſuch a Man into the Hands of *Murderers* and *Oppreſſors*, who are ever ready to *prey* upon their *Fellow-Creatures*, when God takes off the Reſtraint, and ſets them at Liberty to follow their own Luſts? And, ſince there are Multitudes of ſuch Perſons in the World, is it not very viſible, how eaſily God can order and appoint ſuch Sufferings for Men, without ordering or appointing any Man's Sins? For this requires no more, than to bring thoſe, whom God appoints for *Sufferings*, into the *Reach* of ſuch Men, and to put them into their Power, and then their own Malice and Wickedneſs will do the reſt, and ſo verify the Obſervation of the *Pſalmiſt*, ſpeaking of God, (*d*) *Surely the Wrath of Man ſhall praiſe thee, and the Remainder of his Wrath ſhalt thou reſtrain.*

UPON the whole therefore we may conclude, that God can employ the wicked

(*a*) *Philo Judæus* de Legat. ad Caium. (*b*) John xii. 5. (*c*) *Sherlock* on Provid. (*d*) Pſal. lxxvi. 10.

* To this Purpoſe *Joſephus* tells us, that, when he was once minded to rob the *Corban*, or the publick *Treaſure* of the Temple, under Pretence of making *Conduits* in the City, and the People roſe up in a Tumult, in order to prevent it; he, ſitting on his *Tribunal*, or Judgment-ſeat, called them before him, and then made his *Guards* fall upon them, not with *Swords*, but *Staves*, which wounded many, and killed ſome; and the reſt, falling one upon another in their haſty Flight, came to ſad Diſaſters. *Antiq. l.* 18.

† Such was the *bloody Act* committed againſt the poor *Galileans*, who, being of more tender *Conſciences*, than the reſt of the *Jews*, would not (as they did) offer Sacrifices for the Health of the *Romans*, and therefore came not to the *Temple*, the Place of Sacrifice, but held their *Congregations*, and performed their Sacrifices by themſelves apart. When *Pilate* heard of this, and had Notice given him of the Time and Place of their meeting, he ordered his *Men of War* to fall upon them, and moſt cruelly put them to the Sword, *mingling their Blood* (as our Saviour expreſſes it) *with their Sacrifices*, Luke xiii. 1. So wicked in all Reſpects was the Adminiſtration of this Governor, that, in a ſhort Time after the Condemnation of our Saviour, he fell under the Diſpleaſure of *Tiberius*, and by him was *depoſed*. Not long after that he was *baniſhed* (as *Joſephus* informs us) by the ſucceeding Emperor *Caligula*, and, a while after that, *diſpatched* himſelf, as *Euſebius* relates. *Baron.* Ann. Eccleſ. *Joſephus* de Bell. Jud. l. 2. *Heylyn* on the Creed, and *Edwards*'s Body, Vol. I.

ed Deſigns and Actions of Men, without *participating* in their Guilt; that he can make their Crimes *inſtrumental* to his wiſe Purpoſes, though they, in committing them, intended no ſuch Thing; and that his *Decrees*, which are but the Reſult of his Foreknowledge, leave Mankind (as his Preſcience does) at their own Liberty, without any Force, or Determination to do ill. This *Judas* was ſufficiently convinced of, when he reflected upon what he had done. He could not interpret, that the Foreknowledge of God had any *Cauſality* or Influence upon his Sin. He could not but be ſenſible, that his own Greedineſs of filthy Lucre was the Occaſion of his Ruin; and, though he could not reſiſt the Temptation when it offered, yet was he conſcious, that the *Neceſſity*, he then lay under, was not *fatal*, but *natural*, not of God's *decreeing*, but of his own *procuring*.

Judas's *Crime and* Repentance *conſidered.*

He had been treated by his Maſter with all the Kindneſs and Condeſcenſion imaginable; had been an *Hearer* of his Doctrine, and a *Spectator* of his Miracles (both Proofs of his Divinity) for the Space of three Years; been *cautioned* againſt the Danger of betraying him, and heard a *Woe* denounced againſt the Perſon, who ſhould act ſo wickedly; and yet all this made no Impreſſion upon him: He eſpouſed the Woe, and deſpiſed the Judgment, and went out unaltered to execute his Deſign. To the High-prieſts and Elders he betook himſelf, who he knew were complotting his Maſter's Death: To them he *ſold* his Life, together with his own Soul, for a vile Price; with them he *conſulted* the *Time* and *Place* proper for the Execution of his Villainy; by them he was *ſent* out, as a Leader of the *Rabble*, to apprehend him; and, as he drew near, with an *Effrontery* equal to his *Perfidy*, he came up to him, with an (*a*) *Hail, Maſter, and kiſſed him:* So that, in this Act of *Judas*, there was a Complication of Ingratitude, Perfidiouſneſs, groſs Hypocriſy, Impudence of Temper, Malice prepenſe, and a murderous Intention, beyond the Power of Advice or Warning, and the moſt awful Menaces to controll. And, accordingly, when he came to view his Crime in this Light, he is ſaid to *repent* indeed, but it is in the *worſt* Senſe of the Word: For the Regret, which he thereupon felt, ſeems rather to have been the Effect of *Confuſion* and *Rage*, than any *goodly Relenting*; the diſmal Agonies of *Frenzy*, and *Amazement*, and Deſpair, rather than that *ſober* and *regular* Sorrow, (*b*) which *worketh Repentance unto Salvation, not to be repented of.*

St. Peter's *Caſe in ſome Meaſure excuſable.*

Peter, on the other Hand, conſidering the many Advantages he had above the reſt, was guilty of an heinous Offence in *falſifying* his Promiſes, and *denying* his Lord baſely, obſtinately, and blaſphemouſly; yet this may be pleaded in Extenuation of his Crime—That *Fear* is a Paſſion, which, in ſome Circumſtances, may befal the beſt and braveſt Minds, and where human Nature is *ſurprized*, and not able to bear the *Shock*, there Compaſſion is due both from God and Man: That though his Profeſſions of *Courage* and *Fidelity* were made with a *ſincere* Heart, yet the *Terror* of his Maſter's Sufferings, and the *Violence* of his own Apprehenſions, ſo confounded him, that he had not his Thoughts and Judgment at Liberty: That his Wickedneſs was not *deliberate* and reſolved, but *ſudden* and involuntary, and imputable rather to a *Diſtemper* of *Paſſion*, than any *ſettled* Senſe of his Mind: That, as ſoon as he was reſtored to the Uſe of his Reaſon, he checked, and condemned himſelf moſt ſeverely for it: That his Fault was begun, and ended, and lamented in the Space of an Hour or two; and that this ſhort *Slip* and *Defection* was abundantly repaired by his *Firmneſs* and *Watchfulneſs* ever afterwards; by his *undaunted* Confeſſions of *Jeſus*, his *glorying in the Croſs of Chriſt*, and, after a Life ſpent in preaching, and Perſecutions of all Kinds, his undergoing * the *ſame Death*, that his Maſter had done before him. This ſettled and deliberate *Fidelity*

(*a*) Matt. xxvi. 49. (*b*) 2 Cor. vii. 10.

* While *Peter* lay in Priſon at *Rome*, and every Day expected to be carried out to *Execution*, the Chriſtians, that came to viſit him, were perpetually ſolliciting him to make his Eſcape. This he, at firſt, rejected, as a Diſparagement to his Courage and Conſtancy; but was, at length, by the *Prayers* and *Tears* of his Friends, prevailed upon, and, accordingly, next Night got over the *Priſon Wall*, and, coming to the *City Gate*, he is there ſaid to have met with *our Lord*; and that, upon *Peter*'s aſking him, *Lord, whither art thou going?* he received for Anſwer, *I am going to* Rome, *to be crucified the ſecond Time.* This *Peter*, taking for a *Reproof*, went immediately back to the Priſon, and, having delivered himſelf up to the *Keepers*, chearfully

Fidelity of his was a noble Compenſation for the *Infirmity* and Tranſports of his Fall. This ſhewed, what the Man was when perfectly himſelf, and ſupported by the Grace of God; and this made his Prayers and penitential Tears, joined with the powerful Interceſſion of his Maſter, that his *Faith might not fail*, find Favour and Acceptance at the *Mercy-ſeat of God.*

Why God ſent his Son into the World in a ſuffering Eſtate.

In reading the *Story* of our Saviour's Sufferings, this Queſtion does naturally occur to our Thoughts, *Why God, when he ſent his Son into the World, obliged him to ſubmit to ſuch a paſſive State and Condition of Life.* This Suggeſtion ariſes from the *immoderate* Eſteem we have for worldly Comforts and Enjoyments, as if none could be eaſy or happy without them; and therefore the Deſign of Providence, in this *Diſpenſation*, was, to confound the Pride, and Vanity, and Fantaſtry of the World, and to convince us of theſe * two Truths, (*a*) that God may love thoſe, whom he afflicts; and that, in the midſt of Sufferings, Men may be innocent, virtuous, and content. It was to regulate our *Conduct* in regard to the Afflictions incident to Life, and to ſet us an Example in his Son, (*b*) *that we ſhould follow his Steps, who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he ſuffered, he threatened not, but committed himſelf to him, that judgeth righteouſly.* It was to give us a due Conception of the *Heinouſneſs* of Sin, which brought ſuch a Load of Calamity upon our Lord, when he became our *Proxy*, and every Moment to bid us conſider, how we ourſelves ſhall be able to bear the Fury of an incenſed God, ſmoaking in Vengeance againſt us, when the Heat of it was ſo violent againſt his own innocent and beloved Son. It was to give *him*, likewiſe, an *experimental* Knowledge of all the Sufferings, that human Nature is liable to, that, from his own Senſe of our Infirmities, he might be (*c*) a *more merciful* and compaſſionate *High Prieſt, both to make Reconciliation for the Sins of the People, and to ſuccour*, at any Time, *thoſe that are tempted*: But (what I chiefly inſiſt on) it was to deſtroy the Works of the Devil, and to make an Atonement for Sin.

To deſtroy the Deſigns of the Devil.

Great, no doubt, was the Joy of the Enemy of Mankind, when he had muſtered up all his wicked Inſtruments together, and, from (*d*) a *Review* of the *Spite* and Malice of the chief Prieſts and Phariſees, the *Fury* and Madneſs of the common People, the *Rage* and Inſolence of the Soldiers, the *profligate* Conſciences of falſe Witneſſes, the *Treachery* and Avarice of one of Chriſt's Diſciples, the Timorouſneſs of a corrupt and *Time-ſerving* Judge, and the *Barbarity* of thoſe, who ſcourged, derided, and inſulted him in the midſt of all his Pain and Miſery, promiſed himſelf an *abſolute* Conqueſt; that he would deſtroy Jeſus, and overthrow his Kingdom, and root out his Name from among Men: And yet obſerve the Power and Wiſdom of divine Providence, which made Sin *inſtrumental* to deſtroy Sin, and to bring about thoſe very Purpoſes, which the Actors and the evil Spirit, which inſtigated them, laboured

chearfully waited until the Time of his Execution. The Death, that he was adjudged to, was *Crucifixion*, and on the *Vatican Mount* it was that he ſuffered: But, when he came thither, he requeſted of the *Officers*, that he might not be crucified in the *ordinary* Way, but might ſuffer with his *Head down*, and his *Feet upwards*, becauſe he did not think himſelf worthy to die in the ſame Poſture, wherein his Lord had ſuffered before him. His Requeſt was granted him: And, in this Manner, he died. His Body, when taken from the *Croſs*, was buried in the *Vatican*, near the *Triumphal* Way; and over his *Grave* was a ſmall *Church* at firſt erected, but, by the Emperor *Conſtantine*, it was greatly enlarged, and beautified, and, in every Age ſince, has ſo increaſed in Splendor and Riches, that it is now become one of the Wonders of the World. *Cave*'s Life of St. *Peter.*

* 1. That *God may love thoſe, whom he afflicts*, is no more, than what ſeveral ancient *Philoſophers* have maintained. Thus *Max. Tyrius*, ſpeaking of *Ulyſſes*, ſays, *that the Gods forced him to wander and beg, and wear Rags, and ſuffered him to be reproached, and reviled, for the Love, and Friendſhip, that they bore to him*: And *Epictetus*, a poor ſlave, but inferior to none of the Philoſophers for Virtue and Wiſdom, *thanks the Gods for his mean Condition*, and ſays, *that he did not believe himſelf to be one jot the leſs beloved by them for that Reaſon.* On the contrary, he ſuppoſes *that he was caſt into a State of Poverty and Contempt, not becauſe the Gods hated him, but that his Conduct therein might be a fit Example for others.* 2. That, *in the middle of Sufferings, a Man may be innocent and virtuous* is confirmed likewiſe by *Plato*, in the ſecond Book of his *Common-wealth*, who, when he would repreſent a righteous Man, giving the moſt unqueſtionable Teſtimony of his Virtue, expreſſes himſelf in theſe Words, *Let him be ſtript of all Things in this World, except his Righteouſneſs; let him be poor, and diſeaſed, and accounted a wicked and unjuſt Man; let him be whipped, and tormented, and crucified, as a Malefactor; and yet, all this while, retain his Integrity:* which does ſo exactly agree with our Saviour's Condition, that, had he not wrote before his Time, one would have thought he had alluded to it. *Tillotſon*'s Ser. Vol. III.

(*a*) *Tillotſon*'s Ser. Vol. III. (*b*) 1 Pet. ii. 21, 23. (*c*) Heb. ii. 17, 18. (*d*) *Stanhope*'s Ep. and Goſp. Vol. II.

boured to defeat. Had not the Men, who were incenſed againſt our Saviour, been ſo exceedingly barbarous and wicked, ſo holy a *Teacher*, ſo innocent a *Liver*, ſo generous a *Benefactor* to Mankind could never have been liable to ſuffer ſuch Indignities; and yet had not his Sufferings been ſo exquiſitely cruel, and the Proceedings againſt him ſo highly injurious, they had not been an equivalent Satisfaction for the Sins of Mankind. The more Afflictions the Devil brought upon him, the more he thought he had undone him; but, by this means, (*a*) his Devices *returned upon his own Head*, his miſchiefs *fell upon his own Pate*, and, contrary to his Intention, he became an Inſtrument, in the Hand of Providence, to bring about the Salvation of the World, *O the Depth of the Riches, both of the Wiſdom, and Knowledge of God! how unſearchable are his Judgments, and his Ways paſt finding out* (*b*)!

And make an Atonement *for Sin.*

It but badly becomes us to ſay, that God had no other Way in Reſerve to bring about the Salvation of the World, than by the Sufferings of his Son; for what are we, that we ſhould preſcribe to him, or ſet Bounds to his infinite Wiſdom? But ſince it conſiſted not with the *Majeſty* and *Immutability* of the divine Lawgiver, to remit the *Penalties* of Diſobedience without ſome *Satisfaction* paid to his Juſtice, we, in our limited Underſtandings, cannot perceive how it could otherwiſe have been accompliſhed. For what was there, that offending Man could offer to his Creator? *Sacrifices* and Expiations were nothing elſe, but *Teſtimonies* of Repentance, nor (*c*) *could the Blood of Bulls or Goats take away Sins, or make him that did the Service, perfect, as pertaining to the Conſcience.* For his own Sins, no Man is worthy to be the *Miniſter of Reconciliation*; for the Sins of others, no Man, who is himſelf a Sinner, can, with Confidence, make *Interceſſion*. For the Sins of Mankind, Angels, who are not allied to us, can make no *Compenſation*. They have Obligations enough of their own to diſcharge, and cannot be ſolvent for any more, than the Debt of their own Gratitude and Praiſe. And therefore, if a Redreſs were to be made, where could we find it, but in the eternal Son, taking upon him the Penalties of our Tranſgreſſions, and by the *Innocence* of his Life the *Bitterneſs* of his Paſſion, and the *Dignity* of his Perſon, making a full, perfect, and ſufficient Satisfaction for the Sins of the whole World. God might indeed, by his own ſupreme and uncontrollable *Sovereignty*, have accepted a Perſon of leſs Conſideration, or remitted as much of his own *Right*, as he pleaſed, without requiring any Satisfaction at all: But then, he would not have made the Pardon of Sin ſo conſiſtent with his *Wiſdom* in the Government of the World, nor would he have given us ſo ample a *Teſtimony* of his Love to Mankind, ſo plain a *Demonſtration* of his Hatred againſt all Unrighteouſneſs, and ſo full an *Aſſurance* of our Redemption, and Re-eſtabliſhment in his Favour, (*d*) *to the Praiſe of the Glory of his Grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.*

How Chriſt in his Divinity *could not ſuffer.*

How our bleſſed Saviour, who was certainly the *Son of God*, and of the ſame *Eſſence* with the Father, can be ſaid to *ſuffer*, for we may beſt reſolve into the near and intimate *Union* of the divine and human Nature in one and the ſame *Perſon:* The Union of the Soul and Body of Man is a good *Illuſtration* of the cloſe Conjunction of the divine and human Nature in Chriſt: But there is this Diſparity in it, that the Soul, by being united to the Body, becomes ſenſible of its Pains, whereas the Union, we are now ſpeaking of, cannot render the Godhead capable of any Suffering. (*e*) *Finite* Beings can *mutually* act, and be acted upon by each other; but the divine Nature in Chriſt, being *impaſſible*, could ſuffer nothing, but remained infinitely happy and glorious, under all the Torments and Agonies that were inflicted on him, both in his Soul and Body. Since the *divine* Nature then is altogether impaſſible, and the *human* only capable of ſuffering, though we attribute Pain and Sorrow to Chriſt, as God and Man in one Perſon, yet we ſhould always take care to appropriate them to the human Nature only. For, although the human Nature was united to the divine, yet it ſuffered as much, as if it had been alone, and the divine ſuffered as little, as if it had not been united; becauſe each kept its reſpective *Properties*, diſtinct, without any *Mixture* or *Confuſion*. But, though the Properties of each Nature remain diſtinct, yet, as they all belong to a *Perſon* conſiſting of both, they receive different *Denominations*

(*a*) Pſal. vii. 16. (*b*) Rom. xi. 33. (*c*) Heb. x. 4, and ix. 9. (*d*) Eph. i. 6. (*e*) *Jenkin's* Reaſonableneſs, Vol. I.

minations, ſome from one Nature and ſome from the other. The Soul is *immaterial* and *immortal*; the Body is *material* and *mortal*: but the Man, conſiſting of Soul and Body, is immaterial and immortal, in Reſpect of his *Soul*, but material and mortal, in reſpect of his *Body*; and yet (the Soul and Body ſtill retaining their different Properties) the Man by Virtue of this Union of the Soul and Body, is denominated from both; is called *mortal*, as to his Body, and *immortal*, as to his Soul. Though therefore there be no real *Communication* of Properties, yet (as the learned (*a*) *Hooker* notes) there is a kind of mutual *Commutation*, whereby theſe *concrete* Names of *God*, and *Man*, when we ſpeak of Chriſt, do take, *interchangeably*, one another's Room; but then we muſt obſerve, that, whenever we attribute to *God* what properly belongs to the *Manhood* of Chriſt, or to *Man*, what can only appertain to his *Deity*, by the Name of *God*, or *Man*, we do not underſtand the *divine* or *human* Nature, but the *whole Perſon* of Chriſt, in whom both Natures are united; and, in this Senſe, we may not improperly ſay, that *the Son of God ſuffered*, i. e. the *Perſon* who is the Son of God; but then he ſuffered, not as he is the *Son of God*, but as *Man* united *perſonally* to the Godhead. In ſhort, it is a Matter of pure *Indifferency*, whether we ſay that (*b*) the Son of God, or the Son of Man ſuffered, ſo long as we mean, that the *Perſon* of Chriſt, in whom there was an *Aſſociation* of theſe two Natures *ſuffered*, and ſuffered not in his *Divinity*, by which he is *truly God*, but in his *Humanity*, by which he, who is truly God, is as *truly Man*.

But on his Perſonality may be ſaid to ſuffer.

Why he ſuffered ſuch grievous Things of his Enemies.

How our bleſſed Lord came to ſuffer ſuch *bitter* Things from the Hands of his Enemies, may be imputable to the Manner of his Life, as well as the Nature of his *Reproofs*. The Author of the Book of *Wiſdom*, as if he had had our Saviour's Caſe before him, introduces the wicked thus beſpeaking one another. (*c*) *Let us lie in wait for the Righteous, becauſe he is not for our Turn, and is clean contrary to our Doings; he upbraideth us with our offending the Law, and objecteth to our Infamy, the Trangreſſions of our Education: he profeſſeth to have the Knowledge of God, and he calleth himſelf the Child of the Lord: he was made to reprove our Thoughts.—We are eſteemed of him as Counterfeits: he abſtaineth from our Ways as from Filthineſs: he pronounceth the End of the Juſt to be bleſſed, and maketh his Boaſt that God is his Father. Let us then ſee if his Words be true.——For if the juſt Man be the Son of God, he will help him, and deliver him from the Hand of his Enemies. Let us examine him with Deſpitefulneſs and Torture, that we may know his Meekneſs, and prove his Patience. Let us condemn him to a ſhameful Death.* A more lively Deſcription of the Sufferings of Chriſt, and of the Motives that excited his Enemies againſt him, can ſcarce be imagined. And though it cannot be denied, that his Reproofs were *edged* with Severity enough, eſpecially towards the Concluſion of his Miniſtry, yet, who can ſay, that the *Son of God*, who perfectly knew the Hearts of all Men, and ſaw plainly the Vileneſs and Hypocriſy of the Perſons, againſt whom he levelled his *Invectives*, *tranſcended* his Commiſſion, when we find *David* and *Solomon*, calling the perverſe Sinner a *Fool*, Times without Number; St. *Paul*, ſtiling *Elymas*, the Sorcerer, (*d*) *a Child of the Devil, and Enemy of all Righteouſneſs*; and the *Baptiſt* allowing the *Phariſees* and *Sadducees* no better Appellation, than a (*e*) *Generation of Vipers?* Theſe Inſtances ſhew indeed, that *Terms of Reproach* are not univerſally unlawful; that in ſome Caſes, eſpecially when it is to expoſe the *horrid* Abſurdity of pernicious *Opinions*, and the *flagrant* Enormity of wicked *Practices*, they are allowable, from the Mouth of a *Superior*, and where there is an high *Authority* in the *Reprover* to give ſuch Language countenance: though it is no Ways incongruous to ſuppoſe, (*f*) that our Saviour, at this Time, might uſe a more than ordinary Freedom in his Diſcourſe, thereby to miniſter freſh *Matter* for the Malice of his Enemies to work upon, and ſo open a more *direct* Paſſage to his bitter and ignominious Death.

Why he permitted the Devil to tempt him.

How our bleſſed Lord, who was God, as well as Man, came to permit himſelf to be tempted by the worſt and moſt abandoned of his Creatures, would be a Matter unaccountable, but that we may preſume it was in order to vanquiſh the Devil in that very Nature, which was foiled and overcome by him before: and, to this purpoſe,

(*a*) Eccleſ. Polity, Lib. 5. Sec. 53. (*b*) *Pearſon* on the Creed. (*c*) Wiſdom ii. 12, &c. (*d*) Acts xiii. 10. (*e*) Matt. iii. 7. (*f*) *Stanhope*'s Ep. and Goſp. Vol. I.

poſe, we may obſerve, that our Lord gave the Enemy all the Advantage, and all the Opportunity of exerting his Skill and Force againſt him, that he could deſire. For whereas (*a*) one *Evangeliſt* ſeems to intimate, that the Devil did not *begin* his Temptations, until the Time of our Saviour's faſting was ended, (*b*) two others do plainly aſſert, that, for the whole *forty Days*, he continued to ply him with them without *Intermiſſion*; which may eaſily be reconciled by ſuppoſing, that at firſt, he tempted our Saviour in a *ſecret* and inviſible Manner, by working upon his *animal Spirits*, and ſo affecting his Mind, diſturbing his Thoughts, and obſtructing his Devotions, and Meditations; but that, finding all his *uſual* Artifices ineffectual, he, at laſt, aſſumed an *human Shape*, and began his Aſſault in *Form*; and that (to make the conflict more *equal*,) our Saviour waved his *Prerogative* for the Time, and, ſuſpending his divine Power, appeared only in the *Character* of a perfect and upright Man, as *Adam* was, when he came out of the Hands of his Maker. This brought the *Trial* upon the ſame *Footing*, that it was at firſt; and, had the Devil ſucceeded now, as he did before, he had for ever prevailed over the whole Race of Mankind. But the victorious Faith and Truſt, the Humility and Patience, Conſtancy and Calmneſs of the *Man Chriſt Jeſus* diſarmed and defeated the bold *Aggreſſor*, and not only *recovered* what was loſt, but *ſecured*, in a great Meaſure, our own *Stability*, if we be but ſo wiſe, as to follow the Example of our *Commander*, to be *ſober, and vigilant*, as he was, and (*c*) *to put on the whole Armour of God, that we may be able to ſtand againſt the Wiles of the Devil.*

How the Devil might ſhew our Lord all the Kingdoms of the World, *&c.*

How the Devil could give our Lord a *proſpect* of *all the Kingdoms of the World, and their Glory*, we may, in ſome Meaſure, conceive, from what we may ſuppoſe that God did to *Moſes*, when he undertook to ſhew him the *Land of Promiſe* (*d*) *from the Top of the Mountain of* Nebo; that either he *ſtrengthened* his Eye Sight, ſo as to extend over the whole Compaſs of the Country, or (what ſeems more likely) he drew, as it were, a large *Map*, and Repreſentation of it, in all the Valleys round about him. And, in like Manner, the Devil, who being the *Prince of the Power of the Air*, cannot fail of being well ſkilled in *Imagery*, might, in the Valleys circumjacent to the high Mountain, on which Chriſt ſtood, frame a ſpacious *Landſkip* of every Thing, that is gay and ſplendid, pompous and magnificent in King's Palaces, and ſo ſet it before his Sight: nor can it be doubted, but that the View would be more *commanding*, and the *Proſpect* more advantageous and delightful, from an *Eminence*, than on a Plain. However this be, from this Manner of *Addreſs* we may learn, that whenever the Devil is minded to incite Men to Sin, he uſually ſtrikes in with their different Tempers and Circumſtances in Life, their governing Paſſions and darling Objects, and from theſe Labours to ſuggeſt ſuch *Ideas*, to kindle ſuch *Deſires*, to raiſe ſuch *Affections* and to carry thoſe, he finds in their Hearts, to ſuch *Exceſſes*, as may put them upon Thoughts, or Words, or Actions, that are exorbitant, and ſinful. Since, by his practiſing upon our Saviour therefore, we are not *ignorant of his Devices*, our Buſineſs muſt be to (*e*) *keep our Hearts with all Diligence, for out of them are the Iſſues of Life.* To (*f*) *reſiſt him ſtedfaſt in the Faith*, and whenever we find him ſoliciting us to any Thing forbidden, to diſſent, on the Words of the *Patriarch*, (*g*) *how can I do this great Wickedneſs, and ſin againſt God?* This was our Saviour's Manner of repelling the Adverſary; and this, if we accuſtom ourſelves to do, (*h*) *God will not ſuffer us to be tempted above that we are able, but with the Temptation alſo make a Way to eſcape, that we may be able to bear it.*

Why he might adventure *to attack him.*

How the Devil came to be *emboldened*, ſo as to make his Attempts upon our Lord, or what *Succeſs* or Advantage he could poſſibly promiſe himſelf in ſo doing, will turn upon this *Suppoſition*, that the Devil, at this Time, had no certain Knowledge of his being the Son of God, and the great Meſſias that was to ſave the World. To this Purpoſe we may obſerve, that ſome *Myſteries* there are in Chriſtianity, which even the good Angels themſelves, that (*i*) *kept their firſt Eſtate*, and are *always beholding the Face of our Father which is in Heaven*, were not fully acquainted with, were eager to *ſearch into*, and gained a more perfect Intelligence of, ſince the Publication of the *Goſpel*. This ſeems to be the Senſe of

(*a*) Matt. iv. 2, 3. (*b*) Mark i. 13. and Luke iv. 2. (*c*) Eph. vi. 11. (*d*) Deut. xxxiv. 1, &c.
(*e*) Prov. iv. 23. (*f*) 1 Pet. v. 9. (*g*) Gen. xxxix. 9. (*h*) 1 Cor. x. 13. (*i*) Jude ver. 6.

of St. *Peter*, when he tells us, that *into the Prophecies, viz.* concerning the Sufferings, and Exaltation of our Saviour Chriſt, (*a*) *the Angels deſire to look*, and this the meaning of St. *Paul*'s declaring, that, (*b*) *by the preaching of the unſearchable Riches of Chriſt, the manifold Wiſdom of God was made known to the Principalities and Powers in heavenly Places.* And therefore we need leſs wonder, that an evil Spirit, who left his *own Habitation*, and whoſe Underſtanding was doubtleſs *debaſed* by his *Fall*, ſhould be dubious and uncertain, whether our Lord was the promiſed *Meſſias*, at the Time, when he preſumed to encounter him. In the whole Encounter our Lord ſeems to *conceal* his Divinity from him, that he might, with more Freedom and Liberty, offer, and urge his Temptations. In his Temptations the Devil's *Preamble, if thou be the Son of God*, ſeems to beſpeak his *Uncertainty* concerning this Matter. This Preamble, we may obſerve, he only uſes in the *two firſt* Temptations, intended to try, whether he was a divine Perſon; but, when he found that he would not perform a *Miracle*, even for his own *Preſervation*, he thence concluded him to be a *mere* Man; and therefore, dropping his *Preface* in his *third* Temptation, he applied directly to the Paſſions and Appetites of human Nature, and, upon his Offer of the Honours, and Profits and Pleaſures of this World, required him to *fall down and worſhip him*, which (as much a *Devil* as he is) he would never have had the Impudence to mention, had he known him, for Certainty, to be *the Son of God.* But admitting he did know him to be the Son of God, or at leaſt the promiſed *Meſſias*; yet, as we find wicked *Men* oft attempting vain, unreaſonable, and abſurd Things, why may we not ſuppoſe the *ſame* of wicked *Spirits*, deſerted of God, and forſaken of all Goodneſs, and right Underſtanding? In the preſent Caſe however, the great *Deceiver* might imagine, that, as by ſeducing the *firſt Adam*, he had excluded Mankind out of that *Paradiſe*, which God had intended for them; ſo by endeavouring to make ſome Impreſſion or other upon the *ſecond Adam*, he might prevent Men from being reſtored to Paradiſe again, and by that Means, a ſecond Time defeat the *Counſel* of God. But, whatever the Event might be, to make the *Trial* would coſt him nothing: It was a *Buſineſs* ſuited to his *Genius*; and therefore he was reſolved to *attempt* the Thing, if it were but for the Pleaſure of doing *Miſchief*.

The DISSERTATION.

Of our Lord's Agony and Prayer in the Garden.

Why our Saviour choſe a Garden.

AFTER our bleſſed Saviour had inſtituted the holy *Sacrament*, to be a perpetual *Memorial* of his moſt precious Death and Paſſion, and ended his *Farewel* or *Funeral* Sermon, we may call it, as it is recorded by (*d*) St. *John*, he went forth with his Apoſtles towards the Mount of *Olives*; and, as he walked along, was pleaſed to inform them, what ſad Diſaſters were to happen both to him, and them, that Night. About *Midnight* he came to *Gethſemane*, a Village ſituate at the *Foot* of the Mount of *Olives*; and, leaving the reſt at the Entrance, he took only *Peter*, and *James*, and *John*, the uſual Witneſſes of all his *Privacies*, along with him into the *Garden*. This Garden was a Place, that he ſometimes reſorted to indeed, but why, at this Juncture, and juſt before his Apprehenſion, he made it the *Scene* of all the *Wo*, that was coming upon him, might perhaps be in *Analogy* to the Place, where our *firſt Parents* tranſgreſſed the Commandments of God. In their Tranſgreſſion it is certain that there were two *grievous* Aggravations, to name no more: 1. That they ſinned in a State of *Innocence*, and *fell*, when, by their own Strength, they were capable of *ſtanding*; and, 2. That they were the *Heads* and Repreſentatives of all Mankind; and, conſequently, as their Guilt is *devolved* upon their whole Poſterity, ſo their Sin was the *original* Cauſe or Fountain of all the Sins, that have ſince, or ever ſhall be committed in the World. Upon both theſe Accounts the Sin of our firſt Parents became *exceeding ſinful*, and, as ſuch, ſeemed to ſtand in need of a *ſeparate* and peculiar

(*a*) 1 Pet. i. 12. (*b*) Eph. iii. 8, 10. (*c*) *Clarke*'s Ser. Vol. VI. (*d*) Chap. xiv, xv, xvi, xvii.

peculiar *Atonement*, which Atonement we have Reaſon to think was made by what our Saviour ſubmitted to undergo in this Garden, though a full Expiation of this, as well as all other Sins, was afterwards made by *the Sacrifice of the Croſs.*

The Violence of his Agony.

AT his firſt Entrance into the Garden, we find him ſeized with exceſſive Sorrow, (*a*) *a Sorrow even unto Death*, as himſelf terms it, and attended with ſuch Fear and Dejection of Spirits, that he begs his Apoſtles not to leave him, but to *tarry and watch with him.* Great was the Extremity, and grievous was the Sorrow indeed, when the Son of God, the great Creator of the World, wanted the Company and Support of weak Fleſh and Blood, of (*b*) *Man that is a Worm, and the Son of Man, that is a Worm:* But, in this whole Tranſaction, we muſt remember that his *Divinity* did not exert itſelf, but ſuſpended its Operations, that the human Nature alone might encounter the Enemy of Mankind, and bear the Burden of God's Indignation againſt Sin. How heavy a Burden the Senſe of this is, we may learn, in ſome Sort, from that Prayer of the *Pſalmiſt*, (*c*) *Put me not to Rebuke, O Lord, in thine Anger, neither chaſten me in thy heavy Diſpleaſure; for thine Arrows ſtick faſt in me, and thine Hand preſſeth me ſore: There is no Health in my Fleſh, becauſe of thy Diſpleaſure, neither is there any Reſt in my Bones, by Reaſon of my Sin.* But what is this, to that Sorrow and Dejection, that Horror and Amazement, that Confuſion and Conſternation, that Anxiety and Diſquietude of Mind, (as the *original* Words mean, but no *Tranſlation* can reach) which our bleſſed Lord, when deſtitute of divine Succours, and under ſuch a Preſſure, felt? a Preſſure, which brought him *thrice* upon his *Knees*, nay proſtrate upon his *Face*, (*d*) to *offer up Prayers and Supplications* for a Releaſe, *with ſtrong crying and Tears*; which forced open the Pores of his Body, and made * large Drops of Blood iſſue out from thence; and which moved God's Compaſſion to diſpatch an Angel from Heaven, that he might ſuſtain his *drooping* Spirits under the diſmal Apprehenſions, that did then ſurround him.

Whence it might be occaſioned.

FOR, to form ſome Image to ourſelves, how ſore our bleſſed Saviour was beſet upon this Occaſion, we may ſuppoſe,—That a Proſpect of all the Iniquities of the World (for which he was to ſuffer) preſented it ſelf in full Proportion to his Mind, and that all the vile and horrid Circumſtances of them ſtood ranged as it were before his Eyes, in all their diſmal Colours; That he ſaw plainly, how much the *Honour* of the great God of Heaven and Earth, as well as the *Dignity* of human Nature, had been abuſed and debaſed by them, and what *Millions* of poor Souls (were it not for his *Interpoſition*) would be expoſed to infinite and intollerable Miſery; he ſaw the Wrath of an incenſed God, armed with Thunder; his Juſtice *flaming* out with Vengeance, and ready to ſentence the greateſt Part of Mankind to everlaſting *Perdition*, unleſs he ſhould undertake to divert the Blow. He ſaw the Perfidiouſneſs of *Judas*, and was grieved, no doubt, that an Apoſtle of his own, whom he had treated ſo tenderly, and to whom he had given ſo many kind Cautions and Admonitions, ſhould behave ſo *ungratefully*, and, blinded with Covetouſneſs, run himſelf into ſo woful a Condition, (*e*) that *good for him it had been, had he not been born.* He ſaw the *Inſults* and Indignities, that would be offered to his Perſon; that he ſhould be apprehended as a *Thief* and a Robber, have a vile *Malefactor* preferred before him, and (to

* The Goſpel Expreſſion is, *His Sweat was, as it were, great Drops of Blood, falling down to the Ground*, Luke xxii. 44. which Words do not ſignify, that his Drops of *Sweat* were like thoſe of *Blood*, i. e. of an unuſual *Thickneſs*, and *Viſcoſity*, and as big as *Drops of Blood*, but the plain Meaning is, that a great Quantity of Blood iſſued through our Saviour's *Pores*, as Sweat is wont to do: And this we are confirmed in, from what we find in ſeveral Authors of good *Credit*, who have aſſured us, that ſuch a *Symptom* has happened in ſome Bodies, which has proceeded from a *Weakneſs* of the Party, a *Thinneſs* of the Skin, and a *Tenuity* in the Blood. The *bloody Sweat* is mentioned not only by *Ariſtotle*, but by ſeveral modern *Phyſicians* and *Hiſtorians*, ſome of which have been *Eye Witneſſes* of it: And therefore we have Reaſon to interpret the Words in the *fulleſt* Senſe, that they will bear, *i. e.* concerning the *Excretion of Blood* through our Saviour's *Pores*, by a *preternatural Attenuation* of it, under that *inward Conflict*, which was in his Soul, by Reaſon of the violent Grief, Fear, and Horror, that he laboured under, from the Senſe of that *accurſed* Death, he was to undergo, and the *divine* Wrath, he was to ſuſtain for our Sakes. *Edwards*'s Body, Vol. I.

(*a*) Matt. xxvi. 38. (*b*) Job xxv. 6. (*c*) Pſal. xxxviii. 1. (*d*) Heb. v. 7. (*e*) Matt. xxvi. 24.

(to complete his Infamy) be hung up in the midſt of *two* of the like infamous Character, which to a generous Mind could not but be cutting. He ſaw the *Terrors* and Torments of the Death, that was approaching him, the Shame, and Ignominy, and painful Diſſolution on the Croſs, which, to a delicate Complexion (as our Saviour's queſtionleſs was) could not but be very frightful. He ſaw the diſmal Calamities, which, in a ſhort Time, would fall upon his *Murderers*, upon the City, and Temple, and Nation of the *Jews*, involved in the Guilt of his Blood, and might thereupon take up his former Lamentation, (*a*) *O Jeruſalem, Jeruſalem, thou that killeſt the Prophets, and ſtoneſt them, that are ſent unto thee!* He ſaw, in ſhort, the ungrateful Returns, that the *World* would make for all his Sorrows and his Sufferings; that the greater Part of it would reject him and his Goſpel, and *love Darkneſs rather than Light*; and, of thoſe, who profeſſed his holy Religion, many would *in Works deny it*, and ſome, *counting the Blood of the Covenant an unholy Thing*, would quite abandon it, and ſo (*b*) *crucify to themſelves the Son of God afreſh, and put him to open Shame.*

THESE, and many more Objects of the like Nature, preſenting themſelves to his *clear* and apprehenſive Mind, in all their horrid *Aſpects*, (*c*) could not but affect his *tender* Heart, full of *Zeal* for God's Glory, and of *Compaſſion* for the Souls of Men, and, at the ſame Time, not inſenſible of a ſuitable *Concern* for its own Preſervation, till it *fermented*, and boiled over with *Tranſport* and *Agony*, which forced its Way through all his Body in ſtrange *Ebullitions* of Blood, * not to be parallel'd by the Sufferings of any Perſon recorded in Hiſtory.

THE Word *Agony* is of a *Greek* Extract, and derived from one, which ſignifies a *Struggle*, a Combat, or a Conteſt for Victory, ſuch as is attended with great Hazard and Fatigue; and therefore we may ſuppoſe, that, in this Conflict, which our Saviour ſuſtain'd in the *Garden*, the Devil, and his Angels were not unconcerned. That our bleſſed Lord, before he entered the Garden, expected ſome terrible *Aſſault* from theſe *infernal Powers*, is evident from this *Premonition* given to his Diſciples, *(d) the Prince of the World cometh, and hath nothing in me*; and his Exprobration to thoſe, that came to apprehend him, (*e*) *this is your Hour, and the Power of Darkneſs*; and therefore, when the two Sons of *Zebedee* went into the Garden with him, he gave them Caution of the Danger they were in, and admoniſhed them very earneſtly *(f) to pray, to watch and pray, (g) that they might not enter into Temptation:* Which plainly implies, that, in that Time, and Place, there was ſomething to be dreaded, and what they were not able to withſtand without the divine Aid and Aſſiſtance. And indeed to what elſe can we impute that prodigious *Drowſineſs*, which, notwithſtanding all our Saviour could ſay and do, ſeized on his Apoſtles, (*h*) but to a *preternatural* Stupefaction of their Senſes, occaſioned by ſome of theſe infernal Spirits, who, to deprive him of the Solace of human Company, did, by their *diabolical* Arts, produce that extraordinary *Stupor*, which oppreſſed them, that ſo, getting him alone, they might have the greater Advantage to tempt and terrify him.

THESE Obſervations make it reaſonable to imagine that this laſt Agony of our Saviour was occaſioned by a mighty *Struggle* and Conflict with the *Powers of Darkneſs*, who, having, by God's Permiſſion, muſtered up all their Strength, intended once more to try their Fortune againſt him; and, to this Purpoſe, (*i*) ſurrounded him, very probably, with a mighty *Hoſt*, and exerted

* For this Reaſon ſome of the *Ancients* are of Opinion, that our Saviour's *Sweat*, at this Time, was ſent upon him by God, as a *Preparative* to the *Prieſthood*, he was to execute, and that all-ſufficient *Sacrifice*, he was to offer. Thus they obſerve, that, in the *Jewiſh* Form of *Conſecration* to the Prieſtly Office, it is ſaid, that *Moſes took the anointing Oil, and of the Blood, which was upon the Altar, and ſprinkled it upon* Aaron, *and upon his Garments, and upon his Sons, and his Sons Garments with him, and ſo ſanctified them*, Lev. viii. 30. And, as in the *Oblations* of the Law, which *prefigured* the Death of Chriſt, it was ordained, that not only the Sacrifice ſhould be *ſlain*, but the Perſon of the *Prieſt*, as well as the *Sinner* ſhould be *ſanctified* by Supplication; ſo, in *Analogy* to theſe Cuſtoms, our Saviour, in the *Garden*, might perform ſome Things *preliminary* to his Prieſthood, and, by that Means, both *ſanctify* himſelf by his own Blood, and, with inſtant and intenſe Prayers, preſent himſelf to God, as our *Propitiation*, and *Redemption*. *Heylyn* on the Creed.

(*a*) Matt. xxiii. 37. (*b*) Heb. vi. 6. and x. 29. (*c*) *South*'s Ser. Vol. III. (*d*) John xiv. 13. (*e*) Luke xxii, 53. (*f*) Ver. 40. (*g*) Matt. xxvi. 41. (*h*) *Scot*'s Mediator. *Scot* Ibid.

exerted all their Power and Malice, in *perſecuting* his innocent Soul, in *diſtracting* it with horrid *Phantaſms*, in *afflicting* it with diſmal *Suggeſtions*, in *vexing* and tormenting it with dire *Imaginations*, and dreadful *Spectacles*, and, in ſhort, in practiſing all the *Arts* and Machinations, their *Subtlety*, and long Experience in Wickedneſs could invent, to tempt or deter him, if poſſible, from the gracious Deſign of redeeming the World. Theſe were the Enemies, our Saviour had to contend with; and theſe their Devices to ſupplant him: And therefore being conſcious, that, in the whole Encounter, his Divinity was to be *quieſcent*, and yet that the Safety and Salvation of all Mankind depended upon the *Succeſs* of it, his only Recourſe was to God, and, in Confidence of his Aid, to pour out his Prayer and Supplication before him, which is the other Thing, we are to take Notice of.

The Purport *and* Reaſon *of our Saviour's Prayer.*

THE *Prayer* is conceived in theſe Words:- (*a*) O *my Father, if it be poſſible, let this Cup paſs from me, nevertheleſs not as I will, but as thou wilt.* The other *Evangeliſts* relate it much after the ſame Manner: *Turn away this Cup*, ſays (*b*) St. *Mark*; and *remove this Cup*, ſays (*c*) St. *Luke*. They all make Mention of a *Cup*, becauſe no *Figure* in Scripture Language is more common, than that of a Man's *Cup* being put for his *Portion* either of Proſperity or Adverſity; and that by the Cup, which our Saviour here ſo earneſtly *deprecates*, we are to underſtand his approaching *Death*, is manifeſt from his calling it, in another Place, (*d*) *the Hour* which he *prays, if poſſible, might paſs from him*; but then an *Hour* fraught with all the Aggravations of Miſery, that we mentioned before, and (*e*) *a Cup of Trembling* and *Aſtoniſhment*, made up of every bitter *Ingredient*, that is loathſom, and ſhocking to human Nature. "The whole Work and Weight of our "Redemption (as an excellent *(f)* Author "upon this Subject expreſſes it) were now "before Chriſt's Eyes and Apprehenſion, "in a more exact and lively Manner, than "we, in this *Body*, can diſcern: For as "all Things needful ſhall be preſent, and "open to us, when we are brought to "God's Tribunal; ſo Chriſt, preſenting "himſelf now before the Judgment-ſeat "of God, to the end that Man might be "redeemed by the *Ranſom*, which he was "to pay for him, did fully and perfectly "behold the *Deteſtation*, which God had "conceived againſt our Sins, and the "*Power of his Wrath* provoked by our "Defection and Rebellion; the dreadful "Vengeance prepared and ordained for "all Iniquity; our dull and careleſs Neglect of our own Miſery, together with "the Craft and Watchfulneſs of our common Adverſary; the Brunt and Burden "of all which he was to bear, and to "avert them from us by that *Satisfaction*, "which the Juſtice of God ſhould then "require at his Hands, as a *juſt Price* and "full Recompence for the Sins of Mankind." Since therefore our Saviour, at this Time, was to bear the *Burden of our Sins* in his Body, and to have the *Chaſtiſement of our Peace* laid upon him, how could he otherwiſe do, than *fear* the Effects thereof, and *pray* againſt them? The *Wrath of God*, he was ſatisfied, would not proceed againſt him to *Condemnation*; but then he knew, that it had infinite Ways to preſs, and puniſh human Nature, above what it was able to bear; and therefore he addreſſed himſelf to his heavenly Father, in ſure and certain Hope, that, if he ſhould not *remove the bitter Cup*, he would at leaſt proportion *the Pain*, he was to ſuffer, to the *Weakneſs* of the Fleſh he bore about him, that neither his *Obedience* might be ſtaggered, nor his *Patience* overwhelmed, and ſwallowed up by *Deſpair*.

FATHER, *if it be poſſible*, abſolutely ſpeaking, all Things are poſſible to God; and therefore we muſt not peremptorily pronounce, that God could not *remit* the Sins of the World without requiring a *Satisfaction*, and equivalent Compenſation for them by the ineſtimable Blood of his own innocent and divine Son. But ſtill, if we conſider God as a wiſe and good *Governor*, one, who is concerned for the Honour and Obſervance of his Laws, and who, in the myſterious Work of Man's Redemption, did principally deſign to diſcourage Sin and Diſobedience, and to promote Holineſs, and the Love and Practice of Virtue in the World. We may thence perceive, that, when he had once fixed theſe Rules and Meaſures to himſelf, it was not poſſible (according to that *Scheme* of Things) for the Determination of our Saviour's Death to

(*a*) Matt. xxvi. 39. (*b*) xiv. 36. (*c*) xxii. 42. (*d*) Mark xiv. 35. (*e*) Pſal. lxxv. 9.
(*f*) *Bilſon*'s Survey, p. 387.

to be *reverſed*; and the Reaſon is, becauſe it is impoſſible for God not to make Choice of the beſt Means, and ſuch, as may conduce to the wiſeſt Purpoſes.

SINCE therefore the maintaining his Laws in juſt Reverence and Authority was a Deſign becoming an holy and righteous Governor of the Univerſe; ſince his Intention was, (by the Sufferings of our *Proxy Chriſt Jeſus*) to beget in us a due *Senſe*, how vaſtly offenſive Sin was to him, and an awful *Dread* of the ſevere Puniſhment, which it deſerved; and ſince the *Reformation* of Manners, and the Love of him and Goodneſs were the Effects aimed at in this Diſpenſation, it will hence follow, that, though with regard to God's abſolute *Sovereignty*, it was poſſible indeed to have had the Sins of Mankind forgiven *freely*, and without any *Atonement*, yet, with regard to the *End* and Meaſures, which the Wiſdom of God, as Governor, and a Lawgiver to Men, had ſet to himſelf, we have Reaſon to think that it was impoſſible. Upon the whole therefore we may conclude, that the Purport of our Saviour's Petition to his heavenly Father was this:—"That, "if he ſaw any other *Method* of bringing "about the great Work of Man's Salva"tion, which might be of equal Efficacy "with that of his *enduring* thoſe bitter "Things, which were now approaching "towards him, he would, in Tenderneſs "to his own Son, make uſe of that *ra*"*ther*, and ſpare him all that intollerable "and inconceivable Anguiſh of Body and "Soul, which, by his condeſcending to "bear the Burden of his Father's Wrath "due to ſinful Men, was, even then, al"ready let looſe, and began to be exe"cuted, upon him."

What induced him to make it.

BUT how was it, that the Son of God ſhrunk back, when he came to the Point of ſuffering, and, by his earneſt Prayers, and Deſires of eſcaping, diſcovered a Want of Courage and Reſolution to do that, for which he came into the World, and was made mortal? Now for a Reſolution of this, we muſt remember, (*a*) that this Son of God was the Son of Man likewiſe; that the *human*, no leſs than the *divine* Nature had its Part in our Redemption; and that, without an Union of both, the *Scheme*, given us of it, was *impracticable*; that, as the *Efficacy* of Man's Redemption conſiſted in this Union, it was neceſſary that clear and undoubted *Evidence* ſhould be given of *both*, in the Actions, and Conduct of our *Redeemer*; that the true *Character* of human Nature lies, not ſo much in the *Actions* and Sufferings of the Body, as in the *Affections* and Operations of the Soul; that in the Soul of Man there is a twofold Principle, which we call *Reaſon*, and *Senſe*, the *latter* of which purſues Eaſe, and Pleaſure, and Safety, and conſults the Preſervation and Advantage of the Body; but the other, enlarging our Proſpect, perſuades us to *forego* ſome preſent Satisfaction, or to *endure* Difficulties and Pains in the Diſcharge of our Duty; that the *Weakneſs* or Corruption of our Nature, as the Caſe now ſtands with us, does not conſiſt in our being *ſenſibly touched* with Fear of preſent Evil, or Deſire of preſent Good, but in ſuffering theſe Things to overbear our Reaſon, and prevail upon us, contrary to its Dictates; and, laſtly, that as Averſion to Pain, and Suffering, and Death, *&c.* are *Paſſions* interwoven with our *original* Frame and Conſtitution, and what *Adam*, in his State of Integrity, was not inſenſible of, ſo is it no juſt Reflection upon the *ſecond Adam*, that he, in like Manner, was affected. Now if Chriſt, as Man, could not be altogether *indifferent*, and unconcerned at thoſe ſevere *Trials*, which he already felt in part, and ſaw coming upon him with great Violence; then ſure it was no Diſparagement of his *Courage* and *Conſtancy*, to uſe all proper Means to decline them, and, conſequently, to expreſs his Concern by praying againſt them, with ſuch *Reſerves* and Limitations, as the *Evangeliſts* mention. It was no Diminution of his *Love* to Mankind to be averſe to Death and other painful Inflictions, but in Truth, an higher Commendation of it, ſince, notwithſtanding his quick *Senſe* and Regret of what he was to undergo, he gave himſelf up to Sufferings, ſo ungrateful to human Nature in *general*, and ſo exceeding bitter to him in *particular*. (*b*) It was no Impeachment of the divine *Decrees*, nor finding Fault with the *Covenant*, that had been contracted, to deſire an Exemption from Agonies and Tortures, if God, in his great Mercy, knew of any other Method of accompliſhing the Redemption of Mankind, equally wiſe and proper; nor was it any Reflection upon his *Obedience*, that, notwithſtanding the Reluctancy

(*a*) *Stanhope*'s Occaſ. Serm.

(*b*) Idem ibid.

Reluctancy of his Nature, he was content to give Proof of it in ſo tender and trying an Inſtance, and to let all the World, both Men and Angels, ſee, that the more paſſionate his Wiſhes were for a Releaſe, the more *meritorious* was his Submiſſion, *nevertheleſs not as I will, but as thou wilt.*

And the Submiſſion of his human *to his* divine Will.

CHRIST indeed, as conſiſting of two Natures, had *two diſtinct* Wills; but, that there could be no *Contrariety* between his divine and human Will, is plain from hence, that the very *Eſſence* and Guilt of Sin conſiſts, in ſetting up our own Will in *Oppoſition* to the Will of God concerning us, which is not to be ſuppoſed in him, who was, in all Things, made like unto us, but ſtill with this Exception, *that in him was no Sin.* In his *human* Will indeed there was a *Diverſity* of Inclinations, according to the different Motions and Tendencies of his *ſenſitive*, or *rational* Appetite. His *Senſe* prompted him to *decline* Sufferings, but his *Reaſon*, upon better and higher Conſiderations, perſuaded him to *embrace* them, and prevailed: Juſt as a Man, for the Recovery of his Health, takes a *Potion*, that he knows to be diſguſtful; or, to prevent a *Mortification*, ſubmits to the *Amputation* of a Limb, and *therefore* ſubmits, becauſe, upon the whole, he perceives the Neceſſity and Benefit of ſuch an Operation. Though therefore there might be ſome *Struggle* between the *ſenſitive* and *rational* Part of Chriſt's human Soul, yet in this there was no *Repugnancy* to the divine Will, becauſe theſe Diſpoſitions *to ſuffer*, or not *to ſuffer*, did not proceed from the ſame *Principle*, and, as ſoon as the *rational* had gained a *Superiority*, it immediately *reſigned* itſelf entirely to the *divine* Diſpoſal. This is all the *Perfection*, that human Nature is capable of, and all, that God expects from us, under any Kind of Difficulties and Trials, *viz.* That we all along preſerve ſuch a *Temper* of Mind, that our Senſe may be ſubordinate to our Reaſon, and both Senſe and Reaſon ready to comply with the *Appointments* of his Providence, and the Tenor of his Commands, notwithſtanding the *Biaſs* of our Nature, which draws ſo ſtrongly the other Way.

ARTICLE

SECT II. * Was crucified, dead, and buried.

The EXPOSITION.

FROM the *general* Conſideration of our Saviour's Paſſion, the Creed directs us to that moſt *publick* and remarkable Part of it, his *Crucifixion*, which put a Period to his Life, by conſigning his *Body* to the *Grave*, and his *Soul* to the *Place* of departed Spirits, a *State* of Separation from it.

That the Meſſias was to die, *and be buried, prefigured and* foretold *in Scripture.*

THAT the *Meſſias*, the great Saviour of Mankind, whenever he appeared in the World, was to *die*, and die upon the *Croſs*, and to be *buried*, though not buried ſo long, as the Fate of other Mortals is, are Facts, that were *prefigured* in the holy Scriptures, and *foretold* by the Mouth of the Prophets. To this Purpoſe the Apoſtle has obſerved, that the Blood of *Abel*, ſhed by his envious Brother, which (*a*) *cried to* Heaven, might prefigure the Blood of Chriſt, *which* (*b*) *ſpake better Things*, not Complaints for Vengeance, but kind Interceſſions for Mercy. *Abraham*'s offering his Son *Iſaac* was certainly a *Type* of Chriſt's Oblation, and *Iſaac*'s carrying the Wood on his Shoulders did not unfitly repreſent our Saviour's *bearing his Croſs*. *The lifting up the brazen Serpent* in the Wilderneſs was a manifeſt *Emblem* of our Lord's Crucifixion, and the *paſchal Lamb* a plain Signification of his Sacrifice, ſince *at the very Time of the Paſſover* (as (*c*) one obſerves) *in the very ſame Month, on the very ſame Day, and at the very ſame Hour, when the Type, the paſchal Lamb was to be killed, the bleſſed Jeſus expired.* Nay, all the Sacrifices under the Law, if they did not ſignify this in *Deſign*, could ſignify nothing in *Effect*; for, as it (*d*) *was impoſſible, that the Blood of Bulls and Goats ſhould take away Sin*, if they had any *Virtue* imputed to them, it muſt have been in Reference to a (*e*) *more excellent Sacrifice, even the Blood of Chriſt*, (*f*) *who through the eternal Spirit offered himſelf without Spot to God.*

(*g*) *Out of the Belly of Hell*, or of the Grave (for ſo it ſignifies in Scripture) *cried I unto thee*, ſays *Jonas*, when encloſed in the Whale's Belly, *and thou heardſt my Voice.* And therefore according to our Saviour's Senſe, who beſt underſtood theſe *myſtical Adumbrations*, he was a proper Type of the Son of Man, who was to (*h*) *be three Days and three Nights in the Heart of the Earth*; and why may we not ſuppoſe, that (*i*) the Man, *let down* into *Eliſha*'s Sepulchre, and, upon touching the Prophet's Bones, immediately reviving, was intended to prefigure our Saviour's Interment, and ſpeedy Reſurrection?

HOWEVER this be, when we read, in the *royal Pſalmiſt*, Words, that could no Ways comport with his Condition (*k*) *O go not far from me, O God, for Trouble is hard at Hand, and there is none to help*—

* *Baſilides*, and his Followers, blaſphemouſly affirmed, "that *Jeſus* did not ſuffer at all, but that it was "*Simon of Cyrene*, the Bearer of his Croſs, who was taken by the *Jews* for him, and ſuffered in his ſtead, "whilſt he ſtood by, and laughed at their Folly and Miſtake." This horrid Opinion is a total *Subverſion* of the very Foundation of *Chriſtianity*, and therefore it is no Wonder, that the *Crucifixion* of our bleſſed Lord ſhould be made an *Article* of our Faith; and then, to evince that the Eyes of the Beholders were not cheated by any Deluſion, or pretended Crucifixion, it is farther inſerted in the *Creed*, that he was not only *crucified*, but *dead* likewiſe, and *buried*, which are ſenſible and undeniable Demonſtrations, that he had a *material* and ſubſtantial Body, becauſe, as ſuch, it might have been *ſeen* and *felt* by any one, that had the Curioſity. But it may be a Queſtion, whether theſe *Particulars*, concerning the Manner of our Saviour's ſuffering, were inſerted in the Creed in *Oppoſition* to ſuch *Hereticks*, or whether they were not *part* of that *Form of ſound Words*, which the Apoſtles left with the *Churches*, wherever they went, and which all Perſons, at their *Admiſſion* into the Chriſtian Communion by Baptiſm, were obliged to confeſs; which ſeems to be more probable, becauſe we find the Apoſtle to the *Corinthians* inſtancing in *theſe*, as the *primary* Doctrines of Chriſtianity. *For I delivered unto you*, ſays he, firſt of all, *that which I alſo received, how that Chriſt died for our Sins, according to the Scriptures, and that he was buried, and that he did riſe again the third Day, according to the ſame Scriptures*, 1 Cor. xv. 3, 4. Crit. Hiſt. of the *Creed*, and *Grabe*'s Notes upon Bp. *Bull*'s Judgment.

(*a*) Gen. iv. 10. (*b*) Heb. xii. 24. (*c*) Bp. *Lloyd*'s Chron. Append. (*d*) Heb. x. 4. (*e*) Heb. ix. 23. (*f*) Ver. 14. (*g*) Jonas ii. 2. (*h*) Matt. xii. 40. (*i*) 2 Kings xiii. 21. (*k*) Pſal. xxii. 11, &c.

For many Dogs are come about me, and the Aſſembly of the Wicked have encloſed me. They pierced my Hands and my Feet; they part my Garments among them, and caſt Lots upon my Veſture: but be not thou far from me, O Lord, thou art my Succour, haſte thee to help me. When we read in the ſame royal Author, ſpeaking to God in another View, (*a*) *My Heart was glad, and my Glory rejoiced, my Fleſh ſhall alſo reſt in hope: for why? thou ſhalt not leave my Soul in Hell, neither ſhalt thou ſuffer thy holy One to ſee Corruption, but thou ſhalt ſhew me the Path of Life.* And when we read in the Prophet *Iſaiah* ſuch plain Predictions as theſe, always, ſuppoſed to relate to the Meſſias, (*b*) *He was deſpiſed and rejected of Men, ſmitten of God, and afflicted, brought as a Lamb to the Slaughter, and cut off from the Land of the Living*; and yet, *when he made his Soul an Offering for Sin, he was numbered with Tranſgreſſors, and made his Grave with the Wicked, and the Rich in his Death*: when in theſe, and many more *typical* Actions, and *prophetick* Paſſages we find the Meſſias thus repreſented in Scripture, our Saviour's Concluſion muſt needs be juſt, (*c*) *Ought not Chriſt to have ſuffered theſe Things, and to enter into Glory?*

And that our Saviour actually did ſo.

But now, (*d*) *thoſe very Things, which God before had ſhewn by the Mouth of all his Prophets, that Chriſt ſhould ſuffer,* even ſo our bleſſed Saviour *has fulfilled.* A conſiderable Time before his Death, while he was in high *Eſteem* among the People, and by his own Followers acknowledged (*e*) *to be Chriſt, the Son of the living God,* he foretold them, (*f*) *that he was to ſuffer many Things of the Elders and Chief Prieſts, and Scribes, and be killed, and raiſed again the third Day.* And, as the Time of his Paſſion advanced, he grew plainer and clearer in ſuch Declarations, for (*g*) *behold we go up to Jeruſalem,* ſays he, *and the Son of Man ſhall be betrayed unto the Chief Prieſts, and unto the Scribes, and they ſhall condemn him to Death, and ſhall deliver him to the Gentiles, to mock, and to ſcourge, and to crucify him, and on the third Day he ſhall riſe again.* Now what he foretold of this Matter was indeed a ſure Teſtimony of his Divine *Preſcience,* but then it was an infallible Argument that ſo it was to come to paſs. When therefore we read of the wicked and remorſeleſs *Jews* (*h*) crying out aloud, *crucify him, crucify him,* and of *Pilate*'s *giving Sentence that it ſhould be, even as they required*; of his delivering him into the Hands of the Soldiers, the Inſtruments commonly uſed in inflicting that Kind of Puniſhment; of their *ſcourging* him firſt, as the Cuſtom was, compelling him to bear his Croſs, and ſo leading him forth unto the common Place of Execution: When we read, that upon his coming to * *Golgotha,* he was nailed to his Croſs with iron *Pins,* (*i*) large enough to contain an Apoſtle's Finger in their Print; that he thus hung, till Exceſs of Anguiſh had quite exhauſted his Spirits, and then, (*k*) recommending his Soul into the Hands of his Father, *bowed his Head, and gave up the Ghoſt*; that thoſe, who wiſhed, and conſpired his Death, made no Manner of Doubt of it; that the Soldiers, who *pierced* his Side, found no Appearance of Life, or *Senſibility* of Pain in him; and, laſtly, that all thoſe, who love to feaſt their Eyes with ſuch *tragical* Spectacles, and (*l*) *came together to that Sight, beholding the Things that were done, ſmote upon their Breaſts, and returned,* as having nothing more to ſee: and, in like Manner, when we read of *Joſeph of Arimathea* begging our Lord's Body of *Pilate,* taking it down from the Croſs, and laying it in his own Sepulchre; of (*m*) *Mary Magdalene,* and other Women bringing the Things, which they had prepared in order to *anoint him,* and of their being prevented by *Nicodemus,* who had provided a (*n*) great Quantity of aromatick Spices, and *wound the Body up with them in linen Cloaths, as the Manner of the Jews is to bury:* When we

* The Place of our Lord's *Crucifixion,* is, by St. *Luke,* called *Calvary,* xxiii. 33. according to the *Latin* Idiom, but by the other Evangeliſts *Golgotha,* according to the *Hebrew,* and both the Words ſignify, as they are tranſlated in the Goſpels, *the Place of a Skull*; and this, according to the ancient Fathers, was ſo called, becauſe *Adam* was there buried, and his Skull found there many Ages after. To this Purpoſe *Origen* tells us, that in his Days there was a *Tradition,* that *the firſt Man was buried where Chriſt was crucified,* in which *Tertullian,* St. *Baſil, Chryſoſtom,* St. *Auſtin,* and ſeveral others, agree, adding moreover theſe Reaſons—"That the "Blood of Chriſt might fall upon *Adam*'s Tomb; that where Sin had its Beginning, it might find its De"ſtruction; and that as in Adam all died, ſo in Chriſt ſhould all be made alive." *Heylyn* on the Creed.

(*a*) Pſal. xvi. 9, &c. (*b*) Iſa. liii. paſſim. (*c*) Luke xxiv. 26. (*d*) Acts iii. 18. (*e*) Matt. xvi. 16. (*f*) xvi. 21. (*g*) Matt xx. 18, 19. (*h*) Luke xxiii. 21, 24. (*i*) John xx. 25. (*k*) Luke xxiii. 46. and John xix. 30. (*l*) Luke xxiii. 48. (*m*) Mark xvi. 1. (*n*) John xix. 39.

we read all this, I ſay, in the Goſpel-Hiſtory, we cannot but conclude, that, in Conformity to the ſundry *Predictions* concerning the *Meſſias*, our bleſſed Saviour ſuffered, and died, and was buried, in the ſelf ſame Manner, the Scriptures had foretold that the like Events ſhould accompany him. And herein we cannot but admire the *Providence* of Almighty God, in diſpoſing Matters ſo, that our Saviour, though a *Jew*, ſhould be delivered into the Hands of the *Romans* to ſuffer in their Way, becauſe their Puniſhment was more exquiſitely *painful*, thereby to make his *Atonement* more *meritorious*, and then be *reſcued* from their Hands again, becauſe the Manner of the *Jewiſh Burial* was more honourable; that his Treatment, when once divine Juſtice was ſatisfied, might be more reſpectful, and, in both Caſes, more conſonant to what had been propheſied of the promiſed *Meſſias*, as will appear in the Sequel.

Crucifixion what Kind *of Death.*

Crucifixion, as we obſerved, is not * a *Jewiſh* but *Roman* Puniſhment, fit only for Slaves and the vileſt *Malefactors*; and the Manner of inflicting it is this:——a *ſtraight Piece* of Timber was ſet faſt in the Ground which had a croſs *Beam* towards the upper Part of it, and, near the lower Part, a ſhort Piece of Wood infixed in the Timber, and *jetting* out of it. To this erect Piece of Timber was the *Length* of the Body, being firſt ſtripped naked of all its Rayments, applied and faſtened: for, the Arms being diſtended, the Hands were nailed to the *tranſverſe* Beam, and the Feet, which ſuſtained the Body, in like Manner, faſtened to the Piece of Wood, which jetted out for that Purpoſe; and in this Situation the Malefactor hung, having above his Head, on the *Top* of the Croſs, a *Table* fixed, whereon his *Accuſation* was written.

How painful and ignominious, how lingring and tormenting this Kind of Death was, we may ſoon convince ourſelves, by conſidering, that the Parts, which were faſtened to the Croſs, being the *Inſtruments* of Action and Motion, were fuller of *Nerves*, than others, and, as by the Spirits in theſe Nerves all *Senſation* is performed, their Perception of Pain and Torture muſt needs, in Proportion, be more quick and tender; that the full *Weight* of the Perſon's Body hanging on the *Wounds*, which the Nails had made, and the Limbs extended as on a *Rack*, and expoſed to the ſcorching Sun, or piercing Air, made his Anguiſh inceſſant, and without the leaſt Intermiſſion; that this continued Pain however did not *ſtupify* any Senſe, but the Diſtance of the Wounds from any *vital* Part preſerved the Senſation, and yet doubled every *Pang*, in making the Death *ſlow* and tedious; that the Death, in ſhort, was ſo *cruel*, as made the *Romans* themſelves, who uſed this Kind of Puniſhment, frequently *ſtrangle* the Party firſt, and then expoſe the dead Body upon the Croſs; ſo *infamous*, that it was the Puniſhment of the vileſt Offenders, of Robbers, and Murderers, provided they were *Slaves*, but if they were *Free*, a Penalty too *ſcandalous* even for them; ſo *ſhameful*, that the Party being ſtripped quite naked, and expoſed to publick View, became the *But* of the Scoffs and Deriſion to every Spectator; and ſo very † *execrable*, that, in the Senſe of the *Jewiſh* Law, whoever ſuffered in that Manner, was *ſuppoſed* to be deſerted by God, or

* The *four* Kinds of inflicting Death among the *Jews* were theſe,——Burning, Killing with the Sword, Strangling, and Stoning. The *firſt* was by melting Lead, and pouring it down the Malefactors Throats; the *ſecond*, by cutting off the Head; the *third*, by putting a Linen Towel about the Criminal's Neck, and drawing him about, till he was quite choaked; and the *fourth*, by throwing him down from ſome Precipice, and thereupon one of the Witneſſes caſting a Stone at him; but if that did not diſpatch him, then all the People took up Stones, and threw at him until he was killed: But, as for *Crucifying*, it was a capital Puniſhment, that the *Jews* never made uſe of, and therefore the greater was the Wonder, that the Populace, on this Occaſion, ſhould cry ſo loudly againſt our Saviour, *Crucify him, crucify him.* *Edwards*'s Body, Vol. I.

† In the general Eſteem of the World, *Hanging* was therefore accounted an *accurſed* Death, becauſe the Malefactors, ſo executed, were thereby ſuppoſed not fit to live upon the Earth, or to touch it with their Feet: But, in the Senſe that the *Jews* had of it, it was ſtill more odious and deteſtable. They indeed never hanged any alive, but having taken away their Lives by ſome other Puniſhment, they uſed to expoſe their dead Bodies upon a *Gibbet*, and thereby ſignified their denying them the Favour of a Burial, which was looked upon as a moſt formidable Thing. The Care of the Funeral Piles and Burial atteſted a Life to come, in which the Body and Soul ſhould be reunited; but this *lifting up* of Men from the Earth, *hanging* them in the Air (where they were to *periſh*) and utterly debarring them from the Privilege of being *interred*, ſeemed to be a cutting them off from the *Hopes* of a future Life, a baffling the *Immortality* of their Souls, and the Reſurrection of their Bodies, and, in a Word, making them equal with the *Brutes*; and therefore no Wonder, that, by a People, who had theſe Notions of it, it ſhould be accounted an *accurſed Death*. *Edwards*'s Body, Vol. I.

or ſubmitted to Affliction by his ſpecial Order, and therefore (*a*) *curſed is every one that hangeth on a Tree.*

The Bitterneſs *of it to our Saviour;*

VIEW then the bleſſed Jeſus, the eternal Son of God, whoſe clear Perception of Mind, and Quickneſs of Senſe, made every Minute's Suffering exceed the Pangs of an *ordinary* Death to him, hanging upon the accurſed Tree, thirſting, fainting, panting, bleeding, and dying for us. Imagine the infernal Powers of Darkneſs hovering around his Croſs, making Sport with his Woes, and inſulting over his Afflictions and Agonies, while Death, the *Prince of Terrors*, makes ſlow Advances, but the nearer it approaches, the more terrible its *Viſage* appears. Behold (*b*) the Company, met together, rejoicing at the Sight, mocking, and deriding him, wagging their Heads, and ſhooting out their Lips, with an *Ah thou, that deſtroyeſt the Temple, ſave thy ſelf*; whilſt others take up the *taunting Proverb*, and ſay, (*c*) *he truſted in God, that he would deliver him, let him deliver him, if he would have him.* Obſerve him, under all this vile Uſage, looking for ſome *to take Pity on him, and there is none*, for ſome to comfort him, and he finds none, while the Load of our Sins preſs down his Soul, the Comforts of God's Preſence are withdrawn, and the black Cloud of his wrathful Indignation is ready to burſt upon him. View our Saviour, I ſay, under this ſad Situation, and then will appear the Reaſon of his crying out, in the Bitterneſs of his Diſtreſs, (*d*) *All ye that paſs by, behold and ſee, if there be any Sorrow like unto my Sorrow, which is done unto me, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me, in the Day of his fierce Anger.*

But not the ſame with what the wicked endure.

BY this however we are not to underſtand, that Chriſt endured the very ſame Puniſhment in Kind and Meaſure, that is due to wilful and impenitent Offenders. The Torments of the *Damned* are without End, without Hope, but *everlaſting* Miſery and *Deſpair* was utterly inconſiſtent with the Condition of one, who could have no *Remorſe*, no *Stings* of Conſcience, no uneaſy *Reflections* of Mind, becauſe he knew no Sin, and had done nothing amiſs. God *bruiſed* him very ſorely indeed; but he never loved him more *tenderly*, than when he was pleaſed thus to wound him. He wounded him, not for his *own*, but *our* Tranſgreſſions, and as he had undertaken to be our Proxy. His Sufferings therefore could not be the ſame, with what ours ſhould have been; but, whatever they wanted in *Duration* and *Extremity*, they received a Compenſation from the *Dignity* of his Perſon, and the *Meritorioufneſs* of his Obedience; and this Obedience, when it was accompliſhed, gave him *ſuch Aſſurance* towards God, that, in the Cloſe of all, we find him placidly expiring with theſe Words, (*e*) *Father, into thy Hands I commend my Spirit.*

How long it laſted.

HOW long our Lord's Crucifixion laſted, we may beſt perceive, by enquiring a little into the Manner of the *Jews* dividing their Day and Night. The (*f*) *Jews* began the Day, not in the *Morning*, as we do, but in the *Evening*, and their Night they divided into *four Quarters*, which they called the (*g*) *four Watches*, and every Watch contained three Hours. The firſt three Hours were the *firſt Watch.* It began at *ſix* a Clock in the Evening; and the laſt of theſe Hours was called the *third Hour.* The *ſecond* three Hours were the *ſecond Watch.* It began at *nine* a Clock, and laſted till *Midnight*; and the *laſt* of theſe three Hours was called the *ſixth Hour.* The *third Quarter* of the Night, beginning at *twelve* a Clock, and laſting till three, was called the *third Watch*; and the *laſt* three Hours, which ended at *ſix* in the Morning, were the *fourth Watch.* In the like Manner they divided their *Day*, which conſiſted of twelve Hours, into *four Quarters*, and to every Quarter allotted three Hours. The *firſt* Quarter was from our *ſix* a Clock in the Morning till *nine*, and the *laſt* of theſe three Hours was called the *third Hour.* The *ſecond* Quarter from *nine* in the Morning till *twelve*, and the laſt of theſe Hours was called the *ſixth Hour.* The *third Quarter* reached from *Mid-day* to *three* a Clock in the Afternoon, and the laſt of theſe Hours was called the *ninth Hour*, and the *fourth*, and *laſt Quarter*, from three in the Afternoon to *Eventide.* Now, from this brief Account of the *Diſtribution* of the Hours of the Day among the *Jews* it will be no hard Matter to perceive, how long our Saviour's Sufferings upon the Croſs continued; for, as one (*h*) *Evangeliſt* informs us, that *it was the third Hour, when they crucified him*, i. e. they

(*a*) Gal. iii. 13. and Deut. xxi. 23. (*b*) Mark xv. 29, 32. (*c*) Matt. xxvii. 43. (*d*) Lam. i. 12. (*e*) Luke xxiii. 46. (*f*) *Edwards's* Body, Vol. I. (*g*) Matt. xiv. 25. (*h*) Mark xv. 25.

they fastened him to the Cross at *nine* a Clock in the Morning, according to our Way of reckoning; so (*a*) another relates, that about *the ninth Hour*, *i. e.* our *three* a Clock in the Afternoon, *Jesus cried with a loud Voice, and gave up the Ghost*; from whence it appears, that in the whole, he was * *six whole Hours* upon the Cross, a long while this, in Comparison of those *Executions* among us, where the Seat of Life is immediately assaulted, but much *shorter* in him, than what was usual, by Reason of the vast Variety of Miseries, that he had passed through before.

Why it ended so soon.

THE wondrous and unspeakable *Agony* in the Garden, the *Violence* of the *Jews*, the *Buffetings* of the Servants, the *thorny* Crown and mercileſs *Scourges*, together with that unspeakable Anguish, and sad Anxiety of Heart, which, before any outward Violence was offered to him, did, with its own Weight, depress his Soul, and make it exceeding sorrowful, and heavy even unto Death; all conspired to spend his natural Strength, and force his Life away. Nature was quite worn out, and what was wanting in *Length* of Time upon the Cross, had been supplied another Way; many other Ways indeed to us unknown. For certainly never any Person died with such Variety, such Bitterness of Torments, of studied malicious Torments: never was any sensible of such exquisite Misery, nor had Cause to utter such a doleful Complaint, as he, who, though the Son of God, yet felt himself so destitute of Consolation, and Support, as to cry out with a *Passion*, that looked almost like Despair, (*b*) *my God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?*

The Prodigies that attended our Lord's Death.

DURING our Lord's Continuance in this deplorable State, all Nature seemed to be disordered. God's (*c*) *causing the Sun to to go down at Noon and darkening the Earth in the clear Day*, was a Prophecy then fulfilled: for the *Evangelist* informs us, that, (*d*) *from the sixth Hour there was Darkness over all the Land unto the ninth Hour*, and that this was no ordinary *Eclipse*, but † a supernatural Defection of the Sun, the Observations of *Astronomers*, and the Testimony of *Historians*, who lived about that Time, and take notice of it in their Writings, are a sufficient Conviction. *The* ‡ *Vail*, which separated between the *Body* of the Temple, and the *Holy*

(*a*) Matt. xxvii. 46, 50. (*b*) Ver. 46. (*c*) Amos viii. 9. (*d*) Matt. xxvii. 45.

* Some indeed are of Opinion, that our Saviour remained upon the Cross only for the Space of *three* Hours, because it is said by St. *John* (wherein he differs from St. *Mark*) that *it was about the sixth Hour, when* Pilate *delivered him to the* Jews *to be crucified*, John xix. 14, 16. and that he gave up the Ghost *about the ninth*, Matt. xxvii. 50. whereupon they suppose, that the *Text*, in one of the *Evangelists*, has certainly suffered some Alteration by the Negligence of Transcribers. But there is no Occasion for this Supposition, because, upon Examination, it will appear, that the Words in St. *John* do not refer to the *sixth* Hour of the *Day*, but the sixth Hour of the *Night*, i. e. *twelve* o' Clock, or somewhat after it. It was about that Time, that Christ was *first* of all examined by *Pilate*, after which he was examined again, and a great deal of Time was spent in his Trial. After his Trial likewise was over, and he given up to the Mercy of the *Jews*, the Soldiers, we find, took him into the *Common Hall*, and consumed the *latter* Part of the Night in mocking, and ridiculing him. So that between the Time of Christ's being *delivered* to be crucified, and being *led away* to be crucified, it is no unreasonable Supposition, that such a Number of Hours might interfere, as are sufficient to preserve the *Genuineness* of both the *Evangelists*. *Heylyn* on the Creed, and *Edwards*'s Body, Vol. I.

† That this *Defection* of the Sun was *real*, is manifest from the Testimony of *heathen* Writers, who have left their *Observations* upon Record, thereby confirming the Accounts, which the *Evangelists* give us of it. Thus, *Origen* shews that *Phlegon*, an ancient Greek Writer of those Times, in his *fourteenth* Book of *Chronicles*, makes mention of a Defection of the Sun in the Time of *Tiberius Cæsar*, in whose Reign our Lord is known to have suffered; and *Tertullian* not only appeals to the same Author, but affirms moreover, that this wonderful Event is recorded in the *Roman Archives*. *Africanus* tells us, that *Thallus*, in the *third* Book of his History, calls this Darkness of the Sun an *Eclipse*, but for that he had no Reason, because it was plainly contrary to the *Course* of Nature, in that it happened in the Time of the *Passover*, when it was *Full Moon*, whereas all ordinary Eclipses of the Sun are always either in the *Wane* of the *old* Moon, or in the *first Quarter* of the *new*, and therefore it is reported of *Dionysius*, that, being at *Helipolis* in *Egypt*, and taking notice of this strange *Phænomenon*, he cried out, *either God himself suffers, or sympathizes with him, that does*. *Whitby* on Matt. xv. 33. *Heylyn* on the Creed, and *Edwards*'s Body, Vol. I.

‡ The Temple of *Jerusalem* (besides the outward *Courts* belonging to it) did properly consist of *two* Parts, *viz.* the *Body* of the Church, which was called *the Holy*, and the *Quire* or Chancel of it, which was the *Holy of Holies*; and into this none might enter, but the *High-Priest* only, and he but once a Year, when *he made Offerings for himself, and for the Errors of the People*, Heb. ix. 7. This Part of the Temple was divided from the other by a very high *Wall*, reaching to the Top, glittering with Gold, and adorned curiously with *carved*

Holy of Holies, and *ſignified* (as (*a*) the Apoſtle obſerves) *that the Way into the holieſt of all was not yet made manifeſt*; (*b*) *was rent in twain from the Top to the Bottom*; and ſo laying the moſt ſacred Part of the Temple open and expoſed, it intimated that Chriſt had procured for us (*c*) *a new and living Way* into the Heaven of Heavens (whereof the *Holy of Holies* was but a Type and Figure) by having (*d*) made *an Atonement, and obtained eternal Redemption for us.* The Earth *quaked*, and, by its Concuſſion (*e*) the *Graves were opened*, but who the Perſons were that *aroſe* from the Dead, is not ſo eaſy a Matter to determine. The moſt probable Conjecture however is, that they were ſome, who believed in *Jeſus* (as old *Simeon* did) but departed this Life before his Reſurrection. Of theſe, it is ſuppoſed that our Saviour ſpake, (*f*) *the Hour is coming, and now is, that the Dead ſhall hear the Voice of the Son of God*; and of theſe it ſeems to be meant, when it is ſaid, that *they went into the Holy City, and appeared unto many*; which certainly implies, that they were well known to the Perſons, they appeared to, and, conſequently, were their *Contemporaries.* However this be, we cannot but admire the *ſpecial* Providence of God, in ordering theſe *Prodigies* to happen, juſt at the Time of our Saviour's ſuffering, and that, at ſuch a Sight, the *Sun* ſhould hide its *Face*, the *Earth* fall into a *trembling* Fit, the *Rocks relent*, and the whole *Univerſe* be out of *Courſe*, to *ſympathize* with its dying *Creator*, to teſtify the Innocence of the crucified *Jeſus*, and (contrary to the *Treatment* of thoſe, who died in the like ignominious Manner) to procure him an *honourable Interment.*

How our Lord came to be buried.

It was the Cuſtom of the *Romans*, whenever they put any to this Kind of Death, never to allow them the Favour of a *Sepulchre*, but to make them hang upon the Croſs, with a ſtrong *Guard* attending them, leſt any pitying Hand ſhould take them down, until the *Fowls* of the Air, or the *Beaſts* of the Field, or the *Injuries* of the Weather had quite conſumed them. Our Saviour's Body was then in the Cuſtody of the *Romans*; but *Joſeph of Arimathea*, a Man of conſiderable Figure among the *Jews*, who had, all along, a good Eſteem of Jeſus, and was now very probably fully convinced of his divine *Miſſion* by the ſeveral *Prodigies* he had ſeen, requeſted of *Pilate*, in whoſe Diſpoſal the *Body* was, that he might be permitted to take it down from the Croſs, and give it a proper *Sepulture*, which when he had obtained, he, and *Nicodemus*, another Man of Diſtinction among the *Jews*, made Preparation for its *Burial.* Great was the Care and Concern of the *Jews* to have a *convenient* Place for their Interment. *Not to ſleep with their Fathers*, as the Expreſſion is, *i. e.* not to lie among thoſe of their own Race and Family, was eſteemed a *Curſe*; and therefore the Manner was, for thoſe, that were wealthy, to purchaſe a *Piece of Ground*, and therein to build them ſuch a *Sepulchre*, as might be a ſufficient Repoſitory for themſelves, and thoſe that belonged to them.

And the Manner of it.

Of this Nature we may ſuppoſe the Sepulchre, where our Saviour was buried: But then the ſacred Hiſtory obſerves farther, that it was *a new Tomb, wherein no Man was ever laid*, and therefore if any *roſe* from it, it muſt infallibly be our Lord; a Tomb, *hewed out of a Rock*, and therefore could not be dug through to convey away his Body; and a Tomb, cloſed at the Entrance with a *large Stone*, faſtened with a Seal, and ſecured with a ſtrong Guard, and therefore could not be forced or ſurprized that way. Such effectual Care has the Spirit of God taken in recording the Hiſtory of our Lord's Burial, to ſecure theſe two great *Points* of the Chriſtian Religion, his *Death*, and his *Reſurrection.*

Various Ends of Chriſt's Crucifixion and Death.

And now, upon a *Review* of what has been ſaid, we cannot but think, that God would never have ſent his Son into the World,

But the Satisfaction of God's Juſt

carved Work. In this Wall there was only *one Door*, which opened inwardly, and, before it, hung the *Vail* here mentioned, (which was made of Silk, and richly embroidered,) to hinder the People from looking into the inmoſt *Sanctuary* of the Temple. Now, beſides the Reaſon alledged above, *the rending of this Vail* might ſignify either the Diſcovery, and laying open the Jewiſh *Rites*, which before were hidden, and concealed from the *Gentiles*, or the Abrogation of the Jewiſh Ceremonies by the Death of Chriſt, or (what ſeems more probable) the breaking down that *Partition-Wall* (by which the *Jews* and *Gentiles* had before been ſeparated) in order to bring both into one *Church*, and to this the Apoſtle ſeems to allude, when he tells us of Chriſt, that *he hath made of both one, and hath broken down the middle Wall of Partition, which was between us, that he might reconcile both unto God in one Body by the Croſs*, Eph. ii. 14, 16. *Heylyn* on the Creed.

(*a*) Heb. ix. 8. (*b*) Matt. xxvii. 51. (*c*) Heb. x. 20. (*d*) Heb. ix. 12. (*e*) Matt. xxvii. 51, 52. (*f*) John v. 25.

World, to be cloathed with our Misery and Mortality, and to suffer and die under all the aggravating Circumstances of Pain, and Shame, and Detestation, but that there were very great and important Ends to be answered by it: And therefore we may venture to say, that it was, not only to communicate a new *Revelation* of his Will to Mankind, to instruct them in a Religion, *perfective* of the Principles, and *conducive* to the Happiness of human Nature, and of that Religion to confirm the Truth and divine Authority by the Testimony of his Son's Blood; not only to set us an Example of Patience, and Submission, and every *passive* Virtue, and to give us Encouragement (whenever it lies in the Way of our Duty) to (*a*) *take up our Cross* chearfully, and (*b*) *to arm ourselves likewise with the same Mind that was in* Jesus; not only to reconcile us to the Pains of Death, which he has *unstinged*, and the Horrors of the Grave, which he hath made a free Passage to eternal Life, (*c*) *he himself taking Part of the same, that by his Death he might deliver them, who, through Fear of Death, were all their Life-time subject unto Bondage*; not only to teach us the heinous Nature of Sin, and God's just Indignation against it, exemplified in his Son, whom, when he only stood in the Place of Sinners, he loaded with all the Sufferings, that a Person perfectly *innocent* was capable of undergoing, and (*d*) *if he did this in the green Tree, what will he do in the dry?* and not only to remind us of the *inestimable* Value of our immortal Souls, which, in the Eyes of God, are Jewels of so great *Price*, that they were thought worthy of *being redeemed*, (*e*) *not with corruptible Things, as Silver and Gold, but with the precious Blood of Christ, as of a Lamb without Blemish, and without Spot.* These are lower and subordinate Ends; the *Satisfaction* of divine Justice, the *Recovery* of God's Favour, and the *Sanctification* of our own Lives, are the *main*.

But the Satisfaction *of God's Justice,*

In the *Remission* of Sins (as we hinted before) God may be considered in a *double* Capacity, as the *absolute* and *uncontroulable* Sovereign of the World, whose Power and Dominion is unlimited; and as the *wise*, and *just*, and righteous Governor of it, who, in all his Actions, consults his own Honour, and the Good and Welfare of his Subjects. Under the *former* of these Considerations, as he is the supreme Lord of all Things, he had an absolute and unquestionable Right to remit Offences committed against himself, either without requiring any Satisfaction at all, or upon whatever Satisfaction he shall think fit to appoint: But under the *latter* Consideration, as he was a just and wise Ruler, concerned for the *Authority* of his Laws, and the Vindication of his own Holiness, the *Scheme* of making Satisfaction could not but take Place, because his divine Majesty would have been *despised*, his Laws *trampled upon*, and his Government *vilified*, if the Violation of his Commands were attended with Impunity. Now Sinners themselves, it is certain, were in no Condition of making Satisfaction, and therefore, if it was to be made by any other, it was necessary, that the Innocence and Dignity of the Person, who was to make it, should be such, as would render his Sufferings worthy to be accepted by God, instead of the Punishment due to Mankind: And such no doubt was the blessed Jesus. He is all along set forth in the holy Scripture, as one, who was absolutely innocent and pure, perfectly righteous, and unblameable in all his Conversation, (*f*) *who did no Sin, neither was Guile found in his Mouth.* But then, as he was the *eternal* Son of God, who submitted to undergo this Punishment, the Dignity of his Person, added to the Purity of his Life, and the *Severity* of his Sufferings, could not fail of devolving an infinite Merit upon all his Performances. So that, if either the *Innocence* or *Greatness* of our *dying* Saviour; if either the *Meritoriousness* of his Obedience, or the *Smartness* of his Sufferings, be of any Avail, he was certainly qualified to offer unto God a *plenary* Satisfaction, and (*g*) *to be a Propitiation for our Sins, and not for our Sins only, but also for the Sins of the whole World.*

The Recovery of his Favour,

And as our blessed Saviour was a Person, in all Respects duly qualified to satisfy the Justice of God, by the Substitution of himself to be punished in our Room; so, having atoned the divine Displeasure, the *Progression* was easy, in Virtue of that, to make Peace and Reconciliation between God and Man. For such was the Goodness and Condescension of the Almighty, that

(*a*) Matt. x. 38. (*b*) 1 Pet. iv. 1. (*c*) Heb. ii. 14, 15. (*d*) Luke xxiii. 31. (*e*) 1 Pet. i. 18, 19. (*f*) 1 Pet. ii. 22. (*g*) 1 John ii. 2.

that he graciouſly accepted of his Mediation, and, upon Condition of our Faith and Repentance, reſtores us to the State, we had forfeited, and renews our Title to a glorious Inheritance in his Kingdom: For this is the comfortable Doctrine of St. *Paul*: (*a*) *God commendeth his Love towards us, in that, while we were yet Sinners, Chriſt died for us, much more then, being now juſtified by his Blood, we ſhall be ſaved from Wrath through him. For if, when we were Enemies, we were reconciled to God by the Death of his Son; much more, being reconciled, we ſhall be ſaved by his Life. And not only ſo, but we likewiſe joy in God, through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, by whom we have now received the Atonement.* But then we are to remember, that (*b*) *this is the Will of God, even our Sanctification*; and that the chief and ultimate End of Chriſt's *giving himſelf for us*, was, (*c*) *that he might redeem us from all Iniquity, and purify unto himſelf a peculiar People, zealous of good Works.* In vain was the Blood of Chriſt ſhed for us, if we ſuffer *Sin to reign in our mortal Body*, and encourage in ourſelves or others thoſe very *Works of the Devil*, which *he was manifeſted to deſtroy.* The *grand* Atonement, which he hath made, will be no Atonement, but an *Encreaſe* of our Guilt, and an *Aggravation* of our Puniſhment, unleſs we (*d*) *be planted together in the Likeneſs of his Death*, and *our old Man be crucified with him, that the Body of Sin may be deſtroyed.* For (*e*) *we are buried with him* (as the Apoſtle argues) *by Baptiſm into Death; that, like as Chriſt was raiſed up from the dead by the Glory of the Father, even ſo we alſo ſhould walk in Newneſs of Life.* (*f*) *Knowing that Chriſt, being raiſed from the dead, dieth no more, Death hath no more Dominion over him; for in that he died, he died unto Sin once, but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. Likewiſe reckon ye alſo yourſelves to be dead indeed unto Sin, but alive unto God, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.*

And our own Sanctification are the main.

The OBJECTION.

" BUT if Jeſus Chriſt was, in Reality, the Son of God, having the divine Nature *inſeparably* united to the human, we cannot ſee, how it was poſſible for him to *ſuffer*, unleſs we ſuppoſe, that the *Godhead* retired, or abſconded, when the Time of any Affliction drew near, and left the *Manhood* to *grapple* with it alone, as our Lord's *Exclamation* upon the Croſs ſeems to import; or that, if it continued with him in that Extremity, it muſt have *born* ſome Part in his *Agonies* and Sufferings, as there are ſundry *Paſſages* in Scripture, relating to this Matter, that will hardly bear any other Conſtruction. On the other Hand, if, at this Juncture of Time, the *Divinity* was united to the *Perſon* of Chriſt, (*g*) we can hardly ſuppoſe, but that it muſt have been united after a Manner more *powerful*, with reſpect to all the Functions of Life, than that, whereby an human Soul is united to an human Body: But now, if the Union of the Soul prevents the *Death* of the Body, much more would the Union of the divine Nature prevent it, and, conſequently, we cannot imagine, how Chriſt, ſo long as the Divinity continued with him, could poſſibly die. But admitted that, ſome Way or other, he was to die, yet (upon a Suppoſition, that he was the Son of God) to have gone off in an eaſy and gentle Manner, one would think, had been more *congruous* to his own Character, and more agreeable to the divine Love for him, than to have him expoſed to ſuch outragious Treatment, and end his Life at laſt by ſuch an ignominious Puniſhment, as reflects a Scandal both upon him, and his Followers. It was to *atone* for the Sins of Mankind, *you will ſay*; but, (*h*) does it not look like a ſtrange Defect of *Goodneſs* in God, to want an *external* Motive to prevail with him to forgive Sinners, and ſuch a Motive, as the Death of his own Son, the moſt innocent and excellent Perſon, that ever was in the World? (*i*) It is the *Fault*, the Crime, that makes the *Obligation* to the *Penalty*; and therefore to puniſh

(*a*) Rom. v. 8, &c. (*b*) 1 Theſſ. iv. 3. (*c*) Tit. ii. 14. (*d*) Rom. vi. 5, 6. (*e*) Ver. 4. (*f*) Ver. 9, &c. (*g*) *Fiddes's* Body, Vol. I. (*h*) *Tillotſon's* Ser. Vol. I. (*i*) *Edwards's* Body, Vol. I.

" puniſh the *innocent*, and releaſe the guil-
" ty, can hardly be conſiſtent with the
" divine *Juſtice:* But the *Mercy* and
" *tender Affection* of God ſeem to be
" clean gone, when we talk of his *ſacri-*
" *ficing* his own Son, to which the Ob-
" lation of Beaſts, among the *Jews*, and
" of their own *Offspring*, among the *Hea-*
" *then*, bear no Compariſon in Point of
" Cruelty. The *Merit* of any Oblation
" however conſiſts in its being *voluntary*;
" but how can the Death of Chriſt be ſaid
" to be *ſo*, when the Diſſolution of his
" Soul and Body was *natural*, was *neceſſa-*
" *ry*, and occaſioned by the Violence of
" the Pain, and Torment, that he was
" made to undergo? Many good Men
" however, we have read of, who, for the
" *Service* of their Country, or the *Pre-*
" *ſervation* of others, have undergone vio-
" lent Deaths, and expired in the midſt
" of Tortures, without the Imputation of
" any *Merit*; and yet, without the Sup-
" poſition, that the Deity did participate
" in Chriſt's Sufferings, how could his
" Death be more *meritorious*, than theirs?
" But even ſuppoſe it both *voluntary*, and
" *meritorious*; yet how the Death of his
" *Body* ſhould be an *Expiation* for our
" *Souls*, we are again at a Loſs to under-
" ſtand. The *Seat* of all Sin is certainly
" the Soul; and therefore to make the
" Atonement *ſimilar*, and *complete*, his
" Soul ſhould have *died*, as well as his
" Body: But, allowing it complete with-
" out *this*, and every Way anſwerable to
" the *Demands* of God's Juſtice, it would
" ſtill be *inconſiſtent* with what the Go-
" ſpel frequently declares concerning the
" *free Grace* of God in the *gratuitous*
" Remiſſion of Sins, which, the *more* it is
" *clogged* with *Terms* and *Conditions*, the
" leſs valuable, and beneficial it becomes."

Anſwered by ſhewing that the two Natures in Chriſt are diſtinct.

As our bleſſed Saviour had the *divine* and *human Nature* both united in his Perſon, (*a*) great Caution muſt be uſed, in obſerving his Actions, that we do not miſtake, in appropriating that to one *Principle*, which properly belongs to another: For, as thoſe Works of Wonder, which exceeded the Power of all *created* Nature, muſt be aſcribed to a *Principle* omnipotent, and *divine*, ſo thoſe others, which relate to *Subjection*, or *Suffering*, or bear any Marks of *Inferiority* or *Dependance*, muſt be underſtood to proceed from a Principle purely *human*. Now, to *ſuffer* in any Kind is a Thing *incompatible* with the Deity; and therefore, when a Perſon, who is God and Man both, is ſaid to do this, it is plain, that he could do it only in one of theſe *Capacities*, and therefore we muſt conclude, that the *Faculties* of the divine Nature were no ways conſidered in it.

THE *Union* between the two Natures was as *intimate*, as we can imagine; more intimate indeed, than what is obſerved between the Soul and Body of Man; and yet their Powers and Properties remained ſo *diſtinct*, as not, in the leaſt, to influence, or affect each other. Each Nature was left to its own proper Condition: The *Humanity* in Chriſt did not bring down the *divine* Nature to a *Level* with itſelf; nor did his *Divinity* exalt the *human* Nature above ſuch Sufferings, as are incident to the reſt of Mankind; as indeed it would be highly incongruous to ſuppoſe, that it *ſhould*, conſidering, that the End and Deſign of this Union was, that the human Nature ſhould *ſuffer*, and that the divine Nature, in Virtue of its Conjunction with the human, ſhould *derive* an infinite Merit, and Value upon its Sufferings.

Yet inſeparable.

BUT though there remained this plain *Diſtinction* between the *Properties* and *Affections* of the two Natures in Chriſt; yet, from the Time, their Union commenced, there was nothing in Nature that could effect their Separation, and therefore our Lord's Complaint upon the Croſs, as it is taken from the Words of *David*, can, in a ſtrict Senſe, denote no more, than God's ſuffering him to fall into great Tribulation, without ſtretching out his Hand to help him: For ſo the *royal Pſalmiſt* explains himſelf, (*b*) *why art thou ſo far from my Help, and from the Words of my Complaint?* And ſo (*c*) the Phraſe in the *Hebrew* Language is known moſt commonly to import. But admitting our Saviour's Caſe to be *extraordinary*, the general Opinion is, that * all, he intended by being *forſaken*, is,——that his Father did not protect, and keep him out of the Hands of

(*a*) *Stanhope*'s Occaſ. Serm. (*b*) Pſal. xxii. 1. (*c*) *Whitby*'s Annot.

* The *Ancients* however have affixed a farther Meaning to this *Invocation* of our Lord's, *viz.* that therein he deſired of his heavenly Father, by ſome publick Sign to manifeſt his Eſteem for that ſacred Perſon, whom both *Jews* and *Gentiles* thus vilified and abuſed; and that, accordingly, upon his uttering theſe Words, *My God,*

his mercileſs Enemies, but permitted them to do their utmoſt, to inſult his Miſery, and glut their Malice with his Blood: Or, at moſt, (*a*) that he had withdrawn thoſe *Emanations* of Joy and Comfort, which ever till then, had filled, and revived his Soul; and removed far from him all thoſe Things, which might any ways aſſwage the Extremity of his Pain and Miſery.

The divine *not ſubject to* ſuffering.

THUS, in what Senſe ſoever we take the Words of our dying Saviour, they can never be made to ſignify ſuch a *Derelict*ion, or Revolt of the Deity, as put a Period, for that Time, to the divine Union. This Union was all along preſerved, and, in the utmoſt Extremity, continued unimpair'd, though it could not ſubject our Lord's divine Nature to any Participation in his Sufferings; and therefore when we read of (*b*) *God's laying down his Life for us*, (*c*) of *killing the Prince of Life*, and (*d*) *crucifying the Lord of Glory*, we muſt remember, that, in common *Diſcourſe*, as well as in the *Phraſe* of Scripture, it is no unuſual Thing, when we ſpeak of a Perſon compounded of two Natures, to attribute thoſe *Actions* and Paſſions to him, under the Denomination of *one* of his Natures, which could be performed only in the *other*. Thus we read in Scripture of (*e*) *the Souls, that came out of the Loins of* Jacob, and of (*f*) *a Soul's touching an unclean thing*, &c. where the Actions peculiar to the Body, by reaſon of the Union of Soul and Body, are aſcribed to the Soul; and thus, (*g*) in our own *Language*, we are apt to ſay, *No body thinks, No body underſtands*, when we all know, that it is the Soul, and not the Body, that thinks, and underſtands. As the Union therefore between the Godhead and the Manhood is like that, which is between the Soul and the Body, the Son of God is ſaid to have *ſuffered*, and the Son of Man (*h*) to have *come down from Heaven*; not that the Son of God could *ſuffer*, or the human Nature was in Heaven before his *Incarnation*; but, according to the uſual Stile of Scripture, the Union between the divine and human Natures entitles the Perſon, conſiſting of them both (under the Denomination of either Nature) to that, which was done in the other. The ſhort of the Matter is, that, (*i*) as the human Nature did not partake of the *Perfections* of the *divine*, ſo neither did the divine Nature partake of the *Sufferings* of the human; but, ſince both Natures were *perſonally* united in Chriſt, by a mutual *Circulation* of Speech, we apply the *neceſſary* Attributes of the human Nature to *God*, and the neceſſary Attributes of the divine Nature to *Man*, always meaning his whole Perſon, who was both God, and Man.

And yet why it was poſſible *for Chriſt to die.*

BUT, though our bleſſed Saviour was both God and Man in one Perſon, and the two Natures in him were ſo cloſely, ſo inſeparably united, as never to be parted more; yet, as his human Nature was naturally *mortal*, the Poſſibility of his *dying*, notwithſtanding this *Conjunction* of his Divinity, will appear, if we do but conſider, that his Divinity did not *exert* itſelf upon all Occaſions, but ſuſpended its Operations, and was under an Obligation, as it were, on ſome certain Junctures, not to act, on purpoſe that our *Reſtoration* might be accompliſhed in the very ſame Nature, wherein we *fell*. In the *Beginning of his Life*, and till he entered upon the Exerciſe of his *Prophetick* Office, there ſeems to be no Appearance in him of the divine Perfections manifeſting themſelves at all. In his *Temptation* in the Wilderneſs, and in his *Agony* in the Garden, his human Nature bore the *Conflict* alone, unſupported, and unaſſiſted; and here, in the *Article* of Death, his Divinity ſo far *ſuſpended* its Influence, as to deliver up his Body to the common Condition of Mortality. This, we may ſuppoſe, was upon a previous Contract with his Father; and therefore, as he is ſaid to have been (*k*) *delivered by the determinate Counſel and Foreknowledge of God*. So, (*l*) *my Father loves me*, ſays he, *becauſe I lay down my Life, that I may take it again. No Man taketh it from me; but I lay it down of myſelf: I have Power to lay it down, and I have Power to take it again. This Commandment I have received of my Father.*

AND

God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me? the Sun *withdrew* its Light, as unwilling, and aſhamed to behold the Sufferings of its Creator: The Earth *trembled* at the dying Groans of the God of Nature: The Rocks *clave* aſunder, to upbraid, as it were, the *unrelenting* Cruelty, and Hard-heartedneſs of the *Jews*; and the *Vail of the Temple* was *rent*, to ſignify God's Readineſs to depart, and forſake a People, that had *embrewed* their Hands in the Blood of his *Anointed*. *Athan.* cont. Arian. Orat. 4. and *Johnſon*'s Ser. Vol. I.

(*a*) *Frield* of the Church, Lib. 5. (*b*) 1 John iii. 16. (*c*) Acts iii. 15. (*d*) 1 Cor. ii. 8. (*e*) Exod. i. 5. (*f*) Lev. v. 2. (*g*) *Jenkin*'s Reaſon. Vol. II. (*h*) John iii. 13. (*i*) *Hooker*'s Eccleſ. Pol. Lib. 5. (*k*) Acts ii. 23. (*l*) John x. 17, 18.

His Death voluntary.

AND indeed, if we attend to ſome Circumſtances in our Saviour's Paſſion, we ſhall find, that his parting with Life was not the Effect of *Neceſſity*, but of his own free *Choice*. To this Purpoſe the *Evangeliſts* have obſerved, that he (*a*) *cried with a loud and ſtrong Voice*, juſt before he *gave up the Ghoſt*; that his Death therefore did not come on by gradual and unavoidable Decays, as it uſually does, when the Voice faulters, and is loſt, and all the Powers languiſh, before the Soul's Departure from the Body; that the Soldiers, who came to take down the Bodies, found that he was dead, before the other two, that were crucified with him; and that *Pilate* himſelf could not but wonder, when he underſtood, from the *Centurion*, that he was ſo ſoon dead: The Meaning of all which is,——not that the Exceſs of Pain and Sorrow had haſtened his Death, but that he voluntarily laid down his Life, at ſuch a Time, as he ſaw convenient; even when he found that all the *Prophecies* concerning him, and the Work he came into the World to finiſh, in his meritorious Sufferings, had received their full *Accompliſhment*. He would not die, till all the *myſterious* Purpoſes of his important Death were fulfilled; and, when they were ſo, he would not (becauſe there was no Occaſion that required he ſhould) live any longer. Never was there, never can there be, a Death, in all Reſpects, ſo free and voluntary. He, who could have commanded *Legions of Angels* to his Reſcue and Deliverance; He, who ſtruck his Enemies down to the Ground with his *majeſtick* Preſence, and afterwards gave them Leave to apprehend him, could likewiſe, if he had ſo pleaſed, come *down from the Croſs:* He could have continued inſenſible to all the Pains of it: He could have ſurvived the ſharpeſt Anguiſh, and, had he not ſuſpended his divine Power, Death could have had *no Dominion over him*, nor ever *bound* him in thoſe *Chains*, which he therefore ſubmitted to, that he might, in a ſhort Time, break them aſunder in a more glorious and triumphant Manner.

The greateſt Patriots not comparable to Chriſt.

SEVERAL great *Patriots* we read of in *profane* Story, who voluntarily devoted themſelves, and *ſacrificed* their Lives for the Good and Preſervation of their Country. Such were the *Decii* among the *Romans*, and the *Phileni*, among the *Carthaginians*; and immortal has been the *Renown*, which ſuch generous Actions have been thought to merit here on Earth, as well as a kind Acceptance in Heaven. Under both the *Jewiſh* and *Chriſtian* Diſpenſations, the *Martyrs (of whom (b) the World was not worthy)* ſuffered many bitter Things. The Author of the Epiſtle to the *Hebrews* has given us a Summary of what the *Jewiſh Worthies* endured, and, from the Writers of Church Affairs we learn, (*c*) that the *Croſs*, the *Rack*, and the *Wheel*, Burning, and throwing to wild Beaſts, were ſome of the mildeſt Torments, that the *Chriſtian* underwent: But then their Names have ever ſince been remembered with Honour; their Souls (*d*) *are now in the Hand of God, and their Hope is full of Immortality*. God *is not unrighteous*, to forget their Trials, and their Sufferings for his Name's Sake. But how ſmall were all theſe, in Compariſon of what his own Son, in Glory equal, and in Majeſty coeternal with himſelf, condeſcended to do, when he (*e*) *took on him the Form of a Servant, and made himſelf of no Reputation for our Sakes*; when, *(f) for the Joy that was ſet before him*, the Joy of redeeming loſt Mankind, and of *bringing many Sons to Glory*, he *endured the Croſs, and deſpiſed the Shame*; when he (*g*) *trod the Wine Preſs of God's Anger alone*, and bore all the Burden of God's Indignation againſt Sin, until *(h) he ſaw*, and conſidered *the Travel of his Soul, and was ſatisfied*. Where ſhall we meet with any Inſtance like this, in the moſt *romantick* Tales of Friendſhip? (*i*) *Scarcely for a righteous Man will one die, yet peradventure for a good Man ſome would even dare to die, but God commendeth his Love towards us, in that while we were yet Sinners Chriſt died for us*. This is the Title, that every Chriſtian has to value himſelf upon, that (*k*) *God ſpared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all*; and this the Foundation of our *glorying in the Croſs* of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, (*l*) that *in him we have Redemption through his Blood*, which was ſhed thereon, *even the Forgiveneſs of our Sins, according to the Riches of God's Grace*.

The Glory of the Croſs of Chriſt.

BEHOLD we then our *High-prieſt* offering up the *great* Sacrifice required for the Redemption

(*a*) Mark xv. 34. (*b*) Heb. xi. 38. (*c*) *Cave*'s Prim. Chriſt. (*d*) Wiſdom iii. 2. (*e*) Phil. ii. 7. (*f*) Heb. xii. 2. (*g*) Iſai. lxiii. 3. (*h*) liii. 11. (*i*) Rom. v. 7, 8. (*k*) Rom. viii. 32. (*l*) Eph. i. 7.

Redemption of Souls, pouring out his own Blood on the Altar of his Croſs, and thereby making an Atonement for the Sins of the whole World! Behold him, I ſay, by the Eye of Faith, and we ſhall acknowledge, that, though there was never a Spectacle ſo *ſad*, yet neither was there ever any ſo *glorious*, and ſo worthy of being contemplated, and admired by Men and Angels. Stripped indeed he was of all outward Comforts and Supports, ſurrounded with every Thing, that, to human Nature, was grievous; and yet, even in this Depth of his *Humiliation*, if we conſider the mighty Work he was accompliſhing, we cannot but deſpiſe all the vain Pomps of Life, in Compariſon of the Splendor of his Sufferings. For then, even then, while he hung on the Croſs, was *the great Captain of our Salvation* fighting our Battles, and ſubduing our Enemies; then was he (*a*) *leading Captivity captive*, (*b*) *ſpoiling Principalities and Powers, making a Shew of them openly, and triumphing over them in himſelf*. Then (*c*) was he vanquiſhing Death by his Death, and opening for us a Gate to Life and Immortality. Then was he diſarming Sin of its Sting, and Hell of its Terrors, and procuring for us thoſe Supplies of Grace, which might enable us to withſtand the Temptations of Senſe, and the Wiles of the Devil.

It is no Scandal to the Chriſtian Profeſſion.

(*d*) WE *preach Chriſt crucified*, ſays the Apoſtle, *unto the Jews a ſtumbling Block, and unto the Gentiles Fooliſhneſs; but unto them, who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Chriſt the Power of God, and the Wiſdom of God.* From whence we may perceive, that the Greatneſs of the Sufferings, and the Miſerableneſs of the Death of Chriſt have been a ſtanding *Objection* againſt his moſt holy Religion, even from its firſt Promulgation. "But where is the Reaſonableneſs of this "(as (*e*) *Arnobius* excellently argues) ſince "the Vileneſs and Ignominy of our Savi- "our's Death changes not the Quality and "Nature of his Doctrine and Life? *Pytha-* "*goras*, ſays he, was burnt alive; but "does this cruel and violent Death in the "leaſt detract from his excellent Sayings "and Precepts? *Socrates*, in like Man- "ner, was condemned, and put to Death "by the *Athenians*; are therefore his "Works, that treat of the Duties of Man- "kind, of no Force and Authority? Are "his Philoſophy and Manners diſparaged "by that? Have they no Worth or Rea- "lity becauſe of the unjuſt Condemnation "of that great Man? Many other excel- "lent Perſons, continues he, have ſuffer- "ed violent and ignominious Deaths; but "are they therefore to be ſcorned and vi- "lified? no, ſurely: no Man, that lived "innocently and virtuouſly, can be infa- "mous for the Manner of his Death.

Why God puniſhed his Son ſo ſeverely.

THERE was a very good Reaſon however for God's afflicting his Son in this Manner: for ſince there can be no true *Expiation* for Sin, without ſuch a Puniſhment, as will expreſs God's *Indignation* againſt it, the greater the Sufferings are, and the more grievous the Sorrows and Afflictions, that our Redeemer, upon this Account, endures, the greater muſt their *Influence* be to atone for Sin, becauſe in all this we have the more certain Demonſtrations of God's Abhorrence of it, even while he pardons it. And thus it is that we account for all the black and diſmal *Scene*, all the ſad and mournful Sorrows, and the tormenting Death and Paſſion of the diſtreſſed and crucified Jeſus. They were all ſuffered for our Sins, and neceſſary for our Salvation. They were the *Evidences* of God's juſt Diſpleaſure againſt us, for whoſe Sake, and in whoſe Stead, he was afflicted, (*f*) and every Stripe, every Groan, every Reproach, that reached his tender Heart, and wounded his innocent Soul, had its Influence to our Peace. In ſhort, ſince God, by thus puniſhing the Sins of human Nature in the Perſon of him, who undertook, by Sufferings, to make Satisfaction for them, atteſts his righteous Indignation againſt our Diſobedience, proclaims his abſolute Purity and Holineſs, and vindicates the Honour of his Attributes, the Wiſdom of his Government, and the ſacred Authority of his Laws, in the *Severity* of thoſe bitter Agonies and Sorrows, which he lays on the Perſon of our *Redeemer*. Every Inſtance, and every Degree of Affliction, which our Saviour felt upon our Account, by bearing the better *Teſtimony* of God's Averſion to Iniquity, makes the Pardon of our Sins, and our Reconciliation ſo much the more eaſily to be obtained, in that it may now be granted, ſo much the more ſecurely, without any juſt *Blemiſh* to the Wiſdom of his Government, or to the Honour of his divine Perfections.

WISE

(*a*) Eph. iv. 8. (*b*) Col. ii. 15. (*c*) *Atterbury's* Ser. Vol. 4. (*d*) 1 Cor. i. 23. (*e*) Adv. Gentes, &c. (*f*) *Turner's* Ser. at *Boyle's* Lect.

No Defect in God's Goodneſs in not forgiving Sin gratuitouſly.

WISE and good Princes do ſometimes publiſh *Acts of Grace* and Indemnity to their *delinquent* Subjects, but are always careful to do it in ſuch a *Manner*, as may give no future *Encouragement* to their Miſconduct, be no *Diminution* of their Dignity, or any *Impeachment* of the Wiſdom of their Government; and therefore generally, they make, at leaſt, one or other of them, who are moſt obnoxious, a Sacrifice, and Example of publick Juſtice: and, accordingly God, as the wiſe Governor of the World, would not forgive the Sins of it upon ſuch *eaſy* Terms, as might encourage the future Commiſſion of it, and reflect a Diſparagement upon his ſacred Attributes; but then, herein he ſhewed his exceſſive Love to Mankind, that, when no Creature, no not all the Creatures both in Heaven and Earth, were found ſufficient to make a *Compenſation* for the Violation of his Laws, he *ſubſtituted* his own beloved Son, both to atone for our *Guilt*, and to bear the Puniſhment due to our Tranſgreſſions, a Kindneſs, and Condeſcenſion ſo aſtoniſhing, that had not he, of his own Goodneſs, been pleaſed to make the Offer, it had almoſt been *Blaſphemy* in Man, either to have thought of it, or deſired it!

IT was therefore no Defect in the Goodneſs of God, that he would not forgive Sin without a proper *Satisfaction*, ſince he himſelf, without laying the *Penalty* upon us, had provided himſelf with a Perſon for that Purpoſe: nor is there any Breach of *Juſtice* in *ſubſtituting* another in the Room of Offenders, if ſo be the Party ſubſtituted has a Right to diſpoſe of himſelf, and ſubmits to a *vicarious* Puniſhment by his own Conſent.

puniſhing Innocent.

Now this is exactly our bleſſed Saviour's Caſe. He agreed with his heavenly Father to diſcharge the *Debt*, which we had *contracted* by our Diſobedience to the divine Laws; and, as it is a common Thing for one Man to be *Surety* for another, ſo no Law forbids us to *exact* a Debt, never contracted by the *Party*, we demand it of, provided it be *ſuch*, as he, by *Suretiſhip*, has made his *own*. In the Caſe of *high Treaſon* we know, thoſe, whom *Proximity* of Blood, or *Conjunction* of Intereſts have linked cloſe to the Offender, though innocent of the *Crime*, are frequently involved in the *Puniſhment*; nor does the *Law of Nations* make any Scruple of putting *Hoſtages* in War to Death, who make themſelves reſponſible for the *Fidelity* of others, though the *Breach* of that *Fidelity*, for which they ſuffer, was neither their own *Act*, nor done by their *Conſent*. And, if a *Commutation* of Sufferings be not repugnant to human *Laws*, what Reaſon can be given, why the *ſupreme* Ruler and Arbiter of the World may not act in the ſame Manner, by *ſubſtituting* his Son in the Place of Sinners?

When he perſonates others.

HIS Son was *innocent* indeed, and to inflict ſuch a Puniſhment upon him may ſeem *arbitrary*, and cruel; but then we are to conſider, that, from the Moment, he *undertook* for Sinners, whatever Right he had before to be treated as an *innocent* Perſon, when once he had offered himſelf a *ſubſtitute*, he waved that *Right*, and became liable to be treated according to the Capacity, he had aſſumed. We muſt be careful therefore, upon this Occaſion, to remember the Difference there is between the *ſame* Perſon, when conſidered *abſtractly*, and by himſelf, and when *ſuſtaining* the Character or Repreſentation of others; ſince ſuch an one's Innocence, though it renders him incapable of Puniſhment in the *former* of theſe Reſpects, hinders not at all, why he may not be a juſt and proper Object of it, in the *latter*. The (*a*) Reaſon is, becauſe the Law no longer looks upon his *private*, but altogether upon his *publick* Capacity; conſequently if they, in whoſe Place he ſtands, be guilty, the Recompence due to that Guilt, is now devolved upon their Proxy. Upon this Account our Saviour, having engaged to make Satisfaction for the Sins of all the World, may, in the *Eye* of the Law, be deemed the moſt *criminal* Perſon living; upon which it will follow, that there could be no Injuſtice in God in making him a Sacrifice for their Iniquities; eſpecially conſidering, that, in making him ſuch a Sacrifice, he did at once put an End to that unreaſonable and bloody Way of Worſhip, which had been ſo long practiſed in the World: For, after this one Sacrifice, which was ſo infinitely dear to God, the Benefit of Expiation was to be expected no other Way; and therefore (*b*) *Chriſt having once appeared in the End of the World to put away Sin by the Sacrifice of himſelf*, (*c*) all other Oblations of this Kind have for ever ſince ceaſed, in

(*a*) *Stanhope's* Ser. at *Boyle's* Lect. (*b*) Heb. ix. 26. (*c*) *Tillotſon's* Ser. on the Satisfaction of Chriſt.

all Parts of the World, where Chriſtianity has prevailed.

God not a bloody or vindictive Being.

It is therefore a wrong Conception of God, to imagine, that he is a cruel and implacable Being, a Lover of Sacrifices and of Blood. The Scripture indeed informs us, that (*a*) *without ſhedding of Blood there is no Remiſſion*, and that by the Blood of Chriſt we are redeemed, are waſhed, are ſanctified, are juſtified, and (*b*) *have an Entrance miniſtred unto us into the holieſt*, meaning Heaven; but theſe are only *figurative* Expreſſions. 'Tis not the *Blood*, but the *Death* of Chriſt, that is the Propitiation for Sin; nor is it ſo much the Death, as the *Innocence*, the *Obedience*, and the *Dignity* of the Perſon, that ſubmitted to it: his *warm Heart*, and *devout* Affections for the Service of God, his *Zeal* for his Honour, and extenſive *Charity* for the Souls of Men, dying for the Salvation of all, that have ever lived, or ſhall live, from the firſt Creation, to the final Diſſolution of the World. Theſe were the Things, that gave it Worth and Eſtimation in the Sight of God, and made it a *Sacrifice of a ſweet ſmelling Savour* unto him; and, though we cannot deny, that God is frequently repreſented under the Paſſions or the Emotions of *Anger*, *Fury*, and *Revenge*, &c. yet are we to conſider, that, in theſe Caſes, the Scripture ſpeaks in *Accommodation* to our Perceptions, and *after the Manner of Men*; thereby to ſignify the *Severity* of thoſe Judgments, which he will inflict upon *impenitent* Sinners; but, to think, that the Death of Chriſt, his only, his beloved Son, was a Satisfaction to his *natural*, and *unappeaſeable* Vengeance and Fury, is ſuch a Notion, as the Word of God knows nothing of, is *incredible* in itſelf, and *irreconcileable* with the other Perfections of the divine Nature.

Chriſt did not undergo the Death of his Soul.

When Chriſt indeed ſtood in the *Place* of Sinners, he took their Guilt, and their Puniſhment upon him, and, in this Reſpect, was the *Object* of God's *vindictive* Juſtice; but that he could not endure the ſame *in Kind*, that Sinners were condemned to, is manifeſt from hence—— that the Reproaches of a ſelf-tormenting Mind, and the killing *Anguiſh* of Deſpair, with ſeveral other Aggravations of Miſery and Sorrow, that go to make up the Sinner's *Hell*, are the Reſult of *perſonal* Guilt only, and can have no Place, where nothing, but unſpotted Innocence, is to be found. Whatever therefore the *Death of the Soul* may mean (as it can mean nothing, but, either a *departing* from Grace, or an *Excluſion* from the Preſence of God for ever) 'tis certain, that our Saviour was not capable of either, and therefore, whatever it was that he ſuffered for us, it could be no Puniſhment of this Kind. His Soul indeed ſuffered much in the Heavineſs and Diſtreſs, in the Horror and Anxiety, that the Senſe of our Sins, and of God's Indignation againſt them occaſioned; but in no Part did he *die*, but in his Body only, and therefore to determine this *Part* of the Objection in the Words of St. *Auſtin*; *There* (*c*) *is a firſt, and there is a ſecond Death*, ſays he, the firſt *Death has two Parts*, one, *whereby the ſinful Soul, by tranſgreſſing, departeth from her Creator*; the other, *whereby ſhe is excluded from her Body as a Puniſhment inflicted on her by the Judgment of God.* The ſecond *Death is the everlaſting Torment of the Body and Soul: Both of theſe Deaths had laid hold upon every Man, had not the righteous and immortal Son of God come to die for us, in whoſe Fleſh, becauſe there could be no Sin, he ſuffered the Puniſhment of Sin without the Guilt of it; and to that End endured for us* the ſecond *Part of the* firſt *Death, that is to ſay, the Death of the* Body *only, by which he ranſomed us from the Dominion of Sin, and the Pain of eternal Puniſhment which was due unto it.*

Man's Redemption conſiſtent with free Grace.

Such is the *Scheme* of Man's Redemption; and that it implies no Diminution of the *free Grace* of God in the Remiſſion of Sins, is plain from the Part, that he bore in it. As a wiſe Ruler and Governor of the World (as we ſaid before) he required that ſome *Compenſation* ſhould be made for the Contempt of his Authority, and the Violation of his Laws; but, this notwithſtanding, he left himſelf ſufficient *Room* for the Diſplay and Exerciſe of his Grace. For, that he, who demanded a Sacrifice for Sin, vouchſafed to provide himſelf a *Lamb without Spot*; that the Sufferings of that Lamb, dying in our ſtead, ſhould be received for *Myriads* of loſt Wretches, that were otherwiſe doomed to everlaſting Miſery; that the effectual *Reſcue* of their Souls ſhould depend, at laſt, upon the eaſy Conditions of *Faith* and *Obedience* to ſuch Laws, as tend to their *Happineſs*, no leſs than

(*a*) Heb. ix. 22. (*b*) Ver. 12. (*c*) Serm. 161.

than their *Amendment*; that, upon the Interceſſion of their *Mediator*, ſuch gracious Aſſiſtance ſhould be afforded them, as is neceſſary to enable them to perform the *Conditions* of Salvation; and that they ſhould be ſaved at laſt, their Faults and Frailties overlooked, and their imperfect Endeavours accepted and rewarded, not for their own, but for the Sake of their *Redeemer*, is *all* ſuch marvellous Grace, and Favour, and Mercy, and Goodneſs in God, as can never be *worthily* and ſufficiently acknowledged, were we to devote every Moment of our Lives to the Service of him, (*a*) *who ſo loved the World, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoſoever believeth in him ſhould not periſh, but have everlaſting Life.*

The DISSERTATION.

Of Chriſt's Satisfaction and Sacrifice.

The true Notion of Satisfaction.

SATISFACTION, as it is applied to Chriſt, is a Word, that no where occurs in Scripture, but *Phraſes* there are almoſt innumerable of the ſame Import, and what cannot well bear any other Conſtruction. For in thoſe ſeveral Places, (*b*) where Chriſt is ſaid to be our *Peace* and *Reconciliation* with God; the *Ranſom*, the *Purchaſe*, and the *Redemption* of our Lives; the *Sacrifice*, *Oblation*, and *Propitiation* for our Sins, what elſe can be intended, but that he made a full *Amends* to his Father for the Crimes and Offences, that we had committed againſt him, and to make an Amends to the Party offended, for the Injury, that is done him, is the true and adequate Notion of *Satisfaction*.

WE are not to ſuppoſe however, that the Satisfaction, which Chriſt made for us, was by Way of exact *Equivalent*, which God was bound to accept: For the Scripture Notion of Satisfaction is this,—— (*c*) that "God, being juſtly provoked to "puniſh the Sins of Mankind, did, nevertheleſs, accept of the Sufferings of his "Son, as a ſufficient Sacrifice of Atonement for the Sins of the World; that, "in Conſideration of this, he was pleaſed "to offer ſuch *Terms* and Conditions of "Pardon, as, upon Men's performing "them, ſhall be ſufficient to diſcharge "them from that *Obligation* to Puniſh-"ment, which they, by their Tranſgreſ-"ſions, were under." The Truth is, (*d*) the Satisfaction of Chriſt does not depend upon * the *Sameneſs of his Sufferings* with what our Sins had deſerved, but upon the *good Pleaſure* of God, who, as the ſovereign *Ruler* of the World, has been pleaſed to declare himſelf appeaſed by the *voluntary* Condeſcenſion and Death of our Lord, as a ſufficient Vindication of his ſupreme Authority. So that he can, upon the Merit of that Sacrifice, conſiſtently with the Honour and Dignity of his Laws, accept the *Repentance* and *Amendment* of returning Sinners, and *freely* forgive them their Tranſgreſſions.

By what Means it was made.

HOW, or in what Manner this Satisfaction was effected for us, we may learn from thoſe Paſſages in Scripture, wherein it is ſaid, that for our Sakes (*e*) *Chriſt humbled himſelf, and became obedient unto Death, even the Death upon the Croſs*; that (*f*) *he ſuffered once for our Sins, the juſt for the unjuſt*; that (*g*) *he bore our Iniquities in his own Body on the Tree*; (*h*) *gave his Life a Ranſom for all*; (*i*) *by his Blood obtained eternal Redemption for us*; (*k*) *reconciled us to his Father in the Body of his Fleſh, through*

* Whatever Idea ſome People may have of this Word, 'tis certain that the Ancients, from whom it is derived, did not underſtand it even in civil Contracts for a complete Payment, but for ſomething given by Way of Earneſt or Security wherewith the Creditor ſeemed to be contented; and even in criminal Caſes it was always uſed in the ſame Senſe, and had Reference to the Will and Demand of the Party offended, not to any preciſe *Quantity* or Value of the Thing itſelf in Proportion to the Injury or Offence committed. And therefore when we ſpeak of Chriſt's *Satisfaction* we follow the ancient Uſe of the Word, and mean by it only that his Innocence, Obedience, and Sufferings had that *Virtue* and *Efficacy* with God from his *good Pleaſure*, that for the Sake of it he will graciouſly reſtore us his plenary Favour, when we have tranſgreſſed, and eternal Happineſs in a glorious Immortality, notwithſtanding our imperfect Obedience, if we truly repent and reform according to the Goſpel. *Chapman's* Euſebius, Vol. II.

(*a*) John iii. 16. (*b*) *Grotius* de Satisfactione Chriſti. (*c*) *Stillingfleet*'s Sufferings of Chriſt. (*d*) *Clarke*'s Ser. Vol. V. (*e*) Phil. ii. 8. (*f*) 1 Pet. iii. 18. (*g*) 1 Pet. ii. 24. (*h*) 1 Tim. ii. 6. (*i*) Heb. ix. 12. (*k*) Col. i. 21, 22.

through Death; and, (*a*) *after he had offered one Sacrifice for Sin, ſat down for ever at the right Hand of God.* Theſe, and ſeveral other Paſſages to the ſame Purpoſe, do ſufficiently declare, that the Satisfaction, made to God's Juſtice for the Tranſgreſſions of Mankind, was by means of that *expiatory Sacrifice* which Chriſt offered upon the *Altar* of his Croſs. But to make the Senſe of theſe and the like *Expreſſions* more intelligible, we muſt obſerve, that, (*b*) according to the *ſacrifical* Rites in Uſe among the *Jews*, from whence theſe Phraſes are borrowed, in all *legal* Expiations it was cuſtomary for the *Owner* of the Beaſt, devoted to the Altar, to lay his *Hands* upon the *Head* of it, thereby to ſignify, not only his *Property* in it, but his *transferring* upon it likewiſe the *Puniſhment* due to himſelf upon the Account of his Tranſgreſſions. By this Ceremony the Creature, to be ſacrificed, was ſubſtituted in the Room of the Sinner, and accordingly accepted; with Alluſion to which it is, that Chriſt is ſaid (*c*) *to have laid down his Life for us*; to have (*d*) *given himſelf for us*; to have (*e*) *died for our Sins*, and to have (*f*) *put them away by the Sacrifice of himſelf.*

The Sacrifice of Chriſt truly expiatory.

2. In all *expiatory* Sacrifices the Uſage was, for the *Perſon*, that brought the Oblation, to *confeſs* his Crime over it, or to (*g*) *put his Tranſgreſſion upon the Head of the Beaſt*; (as the Law of the *Scape-goat* expreſſes it) whereupon the *Victim* was ſuppoſed to be *charged* with the Sins of the *Offerer*, and, upon that Account, looked * upon as unclean, and as conveying a *legal* Impurity to every one that touched it; and for this Reaſon it was ordered to be *burnt without the Camp*, during the Service of the *Tabernacle*; and without *the Gate of Jeruſalem*, after the Building of the *Temple*. In Analogy to all which, God is ſaid to have *laid* upon our Saviour (*h*) *the Iniquities of us all*, who (*i*) *bore our Sins in his Body*, was (*k*) *made Sin and a Curſe for us*, by having the Guilt of our Crimes tranſferred upon him, and therefore ſuffered (*l*) *without the Gate* of the City, in Conformity to the *Bodies of Beaſts*, that were offered in *Sacrifice*, and burnt without the Camp.

3. In a Sacrifice for Sin however, it was not enough, that it ſhould be *ſlain*, but it was required likewiſe that it ſhould be ſolemnly *offered*, or *preſented* unto God; and therefore we find, that, in every ordinary Expiation, the Prieſt was to *ſprinkle* the Blood of the Victim on and about the (*m*) *Altar, that was before the Lord*, but, on the great *Day of Expiation*, the High Prieſt only was to enter into the *holy Place within the Vail*, and there preſent the Blood of the Sacrifice (*n*) before *the Mercy Seat, which was upon the Ark*, and ſuppoſed to be the Place of Reſidence for the *God of Iſrael*. With an Eye to all which, we find the Author to the *Hebrews* very copiouſly expreſſing himſelf in this Manner:—— (*o*) *Chriſt, being an high Prieſt of good Things to come, by a greater, and more perfect Tabernacle, not made with Hands, that is to ſay, not of this Building, neither by the Blood of Goats, or Calves, but by his own Blood, entered in once into the holy Place, having obtained eternal Redemption for us*, &c.

4. In a Sacrifice of this Kind it was not enough to have it *offered*, or preſented to God, unleſs there was ſome good Grounds to believe, that it was *admitted* and *accepted* by him in Lieu of the Puniſhment, that the Offerer had deſerved: And this accounts for the Reaſon, why, among the *Jews*, the Uſe of Blood was prohibited in common *Food*, (*p*) *even becauſe God had given it to them upon the Altar, to make an Atonement for their Souls*; upon which Account it is, that we hear ſo often (*q*) *of Redemption through the Blood of Chriſt*, of (*r*) *Peace made by the Blood of the Croſs*, of our

† To this Purpoſe, *Grotius*, by many plain Quotations from their Authors, proves that the Heathen did not only think that in their *animal* Sacrifices they offered one Life for another, but that in their *human* likewiſe they looked upon the Perſon that was ſlain to be *piacular*, as bearing the Sins and Impurities of thoſe, who brought him to the Altar; and accordingly he tells us, that, in ancient Days, the People of *Marſeilles*, a Town in *France*, whenever the Plague was among them, were uſed at the publick Charge to feed ſome poor Perſon, whom they adorned with ſweet Herbs, and cloathed in a ſacred Robe, and ſo led him about the Streets, while every one followed him with bitter Curſes and Imprecations, that all the Calamities of the City might fall upon his Head, before they offered him to the immortal Gods. De Satisfactione Chriſti.

(*a*) Heb. x. 12. (*b*) *Scot*'s Mediator. (*c*) 1 John iii. 6. (*d*) Tit. ii. 14. (*e*) 1 Cor. xv. 3. (*f*) Heb. ix. 26. (*g*) Lev. xvi. 21. (*h*) Iſai. liii. 6. (*i*) 2 Pet. ii. 24. (*k*) 2 Cor. v. 21. and Gal. iii. 13. (*l*) Heb. xiii. 11, 12. (*m*) Lev. xvi. 18. (*n*) Lev. xvi. 2. (*o*) Heb. ix. 11, &c. (*p*) Lev. xvii. 11. (*q*) Rom. iii. 25. (*r*) Col. i. 20.

our (*a*) *Acceptance with God in the beloved*, and of Chriſt's (*b*) *giving himſelf for us, an Offering and a Sacrifice to God for a ſweet ſmelling Savour*. Now if we are allowed to interpret theſe Paſſages in the *New Teſtament* agreeably to thoſe in the *Old*, whereunto they manifeſtly do allude, the Inference is unavoidable, that the Perſon, who is thus declared to ſuffer, and to die for us, did not die only for our *Benefit*, but in our *Stead*, and, by a proper *ſacrifical Subſtitution*, underwent the Puniſhment of our Iniquities.

Why Sacrifices were inſtituted at firſt.

WHETHER Sacrifices were originally the *Invention* of Men, or (what is more probable) * the *poſitive* Inſtitution of God, it is certain, that, from the very firſt, they were of various Kinds; that *ſome* of them were offered by Way of *Tribute*, or grateful Acknowledgments of Benefits already received; *others*, to procure a Continuation of Favour and Bleſſing from the Fountain of all Goodneſs; and *others*, to deprecate the divine Diſpleaſure, and make an *Atonement* for the Puniſhments, that a *Conſciouſneſs* of Guilt could not but dread. The Inſtitution of *expiatory* Sacrifices among the *Jews*, was (*c*) in *Relaxation* of the Rigour of the Laws, that God had given them. The Law, which required a *perfect* and unſinning Obedience, made Death the Penalty of every Tranſgreſſion; for (*d*) *curſed is every one, that continueth not in all the Things, which are written in the Book of the Law, to do them*, was its ſevere Denunciation; but here the Kindneſs and Compaſſion of the divine Legiſlator interpoſed, and, at the ſame Time, notified his Willingneſs to accept of the Death of a *Beaſt*, offered in Sacrifice, inſtead of the Death of the *Offender*, who, by ſuch Commutation, ſhould have his Crime atoned, and himſelf reſcued from the Execution of the *penal* Law upon him.

Why Animal *Sacrifices.*

NOW why God made the *Death* of a Beaſt, rather than the *Oblation* of the Fruits of the Earth, the ſubject Matter of ſuch Atonement, ſeems to be a Deſign of making the Offender ſenſible of his Severity and Indignation againſt Sin. For when the Sinner found, that, for every Tranſgreſſion of the Law, he muſt be at the Charge of providing himſelf with an Animal *proportionate* to the Nature of his Crime, the very *Expenſiveneſs* of Wickedneſs could hardly fail of being ſome Bar and Reſtraint to it: But then when he ſaw the poor Creature ſtruggling for Life, and under the Pangs and Agonies of Death, in Groans and Convulſions expiring; and reflected with himſelf, that ſuch muſt have been his own Fate and Puniſhment, had God been extreme to inflict the Penalty upon him; under ſuch Reflections, I ſay, he could not but perceive the Heinouſneſs of his Sin, which, in the Victim, was treated with ſo much Severity, and, at the ſame Time, the merciful *Goodneſs* of God, which admitted a *vicarious* Puniſhment for it.

How far they were expiatory *of Sin.*

OF what Virtue and Efficacy toward the *Expiation* of Sin, ſuch Animal Sacrifices were, we may in ſome Meaſure perceive by conſidering the People of the *Jews* (*e*) in a *double* Capacity, either as Members of a *Society*, ſubſiſting by a Body of Laws, which were of a very rigorous Nature; or as obliged to a certain *Religion*, or *Mode* of Worſhip, which required them to make Uſe of frequent *Purifications*, and

* From the very firſt Beginning of the World we read of *Sacrificing*, but that it could not be the Invention of Men appears from hence,——that there is nothing in the Nature of the Thing, that could poſſibly lead Men to it. For how could any one imagine, that in the *Blood of Bulls and of Goats* there could be any Efficacy to take away Sins, or that God could ever be induced to accept of that in Compenſation for the Crimes of Mankind? A Thought of this Kind could never have entered into the Heart of Man, without a divine Revelation; and therefore it is reaſonable to believe, that as our firſt Parents had been threatened with Death, but were entirely ignorant what that Penalty meant, the Inſtitution of Sacrifices was intended to excite and preſerve in their Minds a lively Senſe of what was meant by Death, and what they muſt expect from their Tranſgreſſions. But then, as they were threatened with Death for their Diſobedience, ſo we read of a Promiſe of a Redeemer to deliver them from it, and if this Redemption was to be effected by the Death of the *promiſed Seed*, then a farther Reaſon of this Inſtitution might be in Remembrance of the Sacrifice which ſhould be offered at his Death. For as it is evident, that God did not intend that this promiſed Redeemer ſhould appear in the World till many Ages after the Promiſe made, it is reaſonable to imagine, that he would appoint ſome Means to keep up the Remembrance of him; and if the Method of this Redemption was to be by his Death, there is nothing more natural than to ſuppoſe, that this Inſtitution of Sacrifices was ordained by God as a *ſacramental* Sign and Repreſentation which the World was to obſerve, in the Faith and Expectation of the Death and Sacrifice of the promiſed Saviour to come, as we celebrate the Chriſtian Sacrament in Remembrance of that Death and Sacrifice already paſt. *Williams* and *Burnet*'s Ser. at *Boyle*'s Lect.

(*a*) Eph. i. 6. (*b*) Eph. v. 2. (*c*) *Grotius* de Satisfactione and *Stillingfleet*'s Sufferings of Chriſt. (*d*) Deut. xxvii. 26. and Gal. iii. 10. (*e*) *Stillingfleet*'s Sufferings of Chriſt.

appointed them ſeveral Sacrifices for that Purpoſe; and, under this View, their Oblations were of two Kinds; *civil*, and *ritual*. That their *ritual* Sacrifices were effectual to the Expiation of all *legal Impurities*, is agreed on all Hands; and their *civil* ones likewiſe, which related to *moral* Defilements (if they were not *notorious* Crimes indeed) were ſo far an *Expiation*, as to preſerve the Offender from *temporal* Death, though they could not ſecure him from *eternal*, nor totally *purge* his Mind from the Guilt, and Conſciouſneſs of his Sin; and from hence the Author to the *Hebrews* undertakes to prove the Neceſſity of an higher Sacrifice to make an Expiation for *Sins*, *as pertaining to the Conſcience*. Let us then ſee if the Sacrifice of Chriſt, as it delivers from (*a*) the ſeveral Miſeries, which Sin is ſaid to bring upon Mankind, does properly deſerve that Character.

Chriſt's Death a complete *expiatory Sacrifice.*

Does Sin, for Inſtance, leave a *Stain* and *Pollution* upon the Souls of Men, ſuch as make them *odious* in the Sight of God, who is of purer Eyes than to *behold Iniquity?* The Blood of Chriſt is ſaid in Scripture to (*b*) *waſh us*, to (*c*) *cleanſe us from our Sins*, to (*d*) *purify*, and (*e*) *ſanctify*, and to (*f*) *purge our Conſciences from dead Works, to ſerve the living God.* Is Sin not unfitly repreſented by *Wounds* and *putrifying Sores*, by *Sickneſs* and Death? (*g*) *By his Stripes* we are ſaid to *be healed*, (*h*) *by him to be quickened, when dead in Treſpaſſes and Sins*, and (*i*) *to live in, and becauſe of him, who died for us.* Do our Sins ſet us at a *Diſtance*, and put us in a State of *Enmity* with God? The (*k*) *Aliens* and *Strangers*, who *were once afar off*, are ſaid to be *brought nigh by the Blood of Chriſt*, whereby (*l*) *he hath made Peace*, (*m*) *ſlain the Enmity*, and (*n*) *reconciled us to the Father by the Blood of his Fleſh through Death.* Laſtly, do our Sins make us *Debtors* to the Law, and, like Criminals under Condemnation, liable to be given up to *Tormentors?* Chriſt, we are told, (*o*) *hath given his Life a Ranſom for many*, (*p*) hath *bought us with a Price*, hath (*q*) *redeemed us from the Curſe of the Law*, and (*r*) *cancelled the Hand-writing, that was againſt us, nailing it to his Croſs.* From all which we may be allowed to conclude, that the Declaration, which our *Church* makes in her *Communion Service*, is very true, as being altogether founded on Scripture, *viz.* "that Chriſt, by offering himſelf once upon the Croſs, has there made "a full, perfect, and ſufficient Sacrifice, "Oblation, and Satisfaction for the Sins "of the whole World."

The Defectiveneſs of other Sacrifices.

In Sacrifices indeed (*s*) the whole World ſeem to have built their Hopes of *Reconciliation* with God, when they had offended. Conſcious they were, that, by their Sins, they had forfeited their Lives to him, nor could they deviſe any other Way to redeem them, but by making a *Commutation*, and offering another Life for their own. To this Purpoſe (*t*) ſome have obſerved, that, on common Occaſions, moſt *Heathen* Nations were wont to ſacrifice *Beaſts*, but, in Times of publick Danger and Calamity, they offered up the Lives of Men, or Women, imagining, that the more valuable the Life was, the greater Virtue it had to appeaſe the Anger of the *Deity*. But herein they were groſly miſtaken; for they never conſidered, that the Perſons, whom they offered, were *Sinners*, as well as themſelves, and that, in an *expiatory* Sacrifice, it was a greater *Flaw*, to be a *Sinner*, than it was to be a *Brute*. The *Jewiſh* Sacrifices indeed had the Promiſe of God for their Acceptance, ſo far as to *purify the Fleſh*, and exempt from *temporal* Puniſhments: But, as the Creatures, which they offered, were incapable either of Sin or Virtue, they could have no Merit with God, and, conſequently, were far from being any valuable Conſideration for the Lives of Mens Souls. But now all theſe *Defects* are abundantly ſupplied by the Sacrifice of our bleſſed Saviour, who was, not only no Sinner, which the beſt of the *Heathen* Sacrifices were, who was not only *negatively innocent*, which is all that the *Jewiſh* Sacrifices were, but perfectly *righteous*, and therefore infinitely *dear* and acceptable to God, who, by raiſing him from the Dead, and exalting him to Glory, made an open Declaration, that he eſteemed his precious Blood as a valuable

(*a*) *Stanhope*'s Ser. at *Boyle*'s Lect. and Epiſt. and Goſp. Vol. II. (*b*) Rev. i. 5. (*c*) 1 John i. 7. (*d*) Tit. ii. 14. (*e*) Heb. x. 10. (*f*) Heb. ix. 14. (*g*) Iſai. liii. 5. (*h*) Eph. ii. 1. (*i*) 1 Theſſ. v. 10. (*k*) Eph. ii. 13. (*l*) Ver. 14. (*m*) Ver. 16. (*n*) Col. i. 20, &c. (*o*) Matt. xx. 28. (*p*) 1 Cor. vi. 20. (*q*) Gal. iii. 13. (*r*) Col. ii. 14. (*s*) *Scot*'s Mediator (*t*) *Grotius* de Satisfactione.

luable Ranſom for the Sins of the whole World.

(*a*) On this *ſure* and *certain* Foundation ſtands our Hope of Pardon, and Reconciliation with God. And what a *ſtrong Conſolation* is this to every *penitent* Soul, that is grieved and wearied with the Burden of his Iniquities, to conſider,—that (*b*) *if any Man ſin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jeſus Chriſt the righteous, and he is a Propitiation for our Sins.* A *Propitiation*, which, by the divine Counſel and Predetermination, was ſingled out, and appointed, and therefore, being (*c*) *the Lamb of God, which was ſlain from the Foundation of the World*, is now in no Danger of being rejected: A *Propitiation* (*d*) *without Blemiſh and without Spot*, and yet voluntarily undergoing our Puniſhment, and (*e*) *made Sin for us, when he knew no Sin, that we might be the Righteouſneſs of God in him:* A *Propitiation* of ineſtimable *Value*, as having the *divine* united to the *human* Nature, and becoming moreover a *Sacrifice of a ſweet ſmelling Savour*, as (*f*) *being offered unto God through the eternal Spirit:* A *Propitiation* of unbounded *Power* and Efficacy, as it extends to all Perſons, and all Crimes, and (*g*) *juſtifies* as many *as believe in it from all thoſe Things, from which they could not have been juſtified by the Law of Moſes:* And, laſtly, a *Propitiation* of everlaſting *Duration*, whoſe Virtue will never decay, as long as the World ſubſiſts, but, in all Ages, be a *ſtanding* Remedy againſt Sin, for as much as (*h*) *Chriſt, by one Offering, hath obtained eternal Redemption for us, and perfected for ever them, that are ſanctified.*

We are to remember however, that, in order to apply this Remedy to ourſelves, we muſt be *purged* and ſanctified; that our Repentance and Reformation are the *Conditions* of our reaping any *Benefit* from this *Propitiation*; and that, if we are reſolved to (*i*) *ſin wilfully, after we have received the Knowledge of the Truth*, (*k*) *the Croſs of Chriſt, and the Blood of the Covenant* will be of no other *Effect*, than to *aggravate* our Guilt, and *inflame* our Condemnation. As therefore we would not find this bleſſed *Sacrifice*, which was intended for our *City of Refuge*, converted into an *Avenger of Blood*, the whole Buſineſs and Care of our Lives ſhould be, to concur with this gracious Deſign, *in purging our Conſciences from dead Works*; that ſo, being *waſhed, and purified in the Blood of the Lamb*, we may appear before God (*l*) *holy, and unblameable, and unreproveable, in his Sight.*

(*a*) *Scot*'s Mediator. (*b*) 1 John ii. 1, 2. (*c*) Rev. xiii. 8. (*d*) 1 Pet. i. 19. (*e*) 2 Cor. v. 21. (*f*) Heb. ix. 14. (*g*) Acts xiii. 39. (*h*) Heb. x. 14. (*i*) Ver. 26. (*k*) 1 Cor. i. 17. (*l*) Col. i. 22.

SECT.

SECT III. * He deſcended into Hell.

The EXPOSITION.

The Manner *of expounding this Part of the Article.*

WE are now come to the *laſt* Inſtance of our bleſſed Lord's † *Humiliation*, which the Creed expreſſes by his *Deſcent into Hell*; but the Expreſſion is ſo *ambiguous*, and clouded with ſo many different *Interpretations*, that the only Way I can conceive of coming at the *true* Senſe and Meaning of it, will be, to enquire a little into ſome of the moſt remarkable *Opinions* concerning it, and then to make *choice* of that, which appears to be beſt recommended by the Senſe of *Scripture*, the Voice of *Antiquity*, and the Analogy of *Faith:* only, before I come to *that*, I would briefly obſerve, upon what *Authority* this ſo much controverted *Clauſe*, that was *later* received into the Body of the Creed, than ordinary, is ſuppoſed to be founded.

What Scripture *it is ſuppoſed to be* founded *on.*

ST. *Paul*, inſtructing his *Epheſians* in the Nature of the ſeveral *Gifts*, which, upon his *Aſcenſion*, Chriſt had given to his Church, has theſe remarkable Words, (*a*) *Now, that he aſcended, what is it, but* a Demonſtration *that he alſo deſcended firſt, into the lower Parts of the Earth*, which ſeveral of the *ancient* Fathers underſtood of his *local* Deſcent into *Hell*, generally ſuppoſed to be ſituated in the *lower Parts of the Earth:* but, as the Apoſtle's Deſign, in that Paſſage, is only to ſhew, that our *Lord Jeſus deſcended* from Heaven, before he *aſcended* thither, this World he calls by the *lower Parts*, not in reſpect of the *Earth* itſelf, but in Compariſon of thoſe *celeſtial Regions*, from whence he vouchſafed to come for our Sakes. This is the whole Intent of the Words; and therefore his *Deſcent* into any other Place cannot from hence be ſuppoſed to receive any Sanction.

ST. *Peter* has a *Text*, which is thought to be *fuller* to this Purpoſe, and to denote, not only the *Truth* and Reality, but the *End* and Deſign likewiſe of our Saviour's *Deſcent*, when it tells us, that (*b*) *he was quickened by the Spirit, by which he went, and preached to the Spirits in Priſon: but* that the *Spirit*, here mentioned, was not the *Soul* of Chriſt, but rather the Power of his *Divinity*, whereby

* This *Deſcent into Hell* was not *anciently* in the Apoſtle's Creed, nor *univerſally* in any. However it might be contained in ſome *private* Confeſſions of Faith, the firſt *publick* one, that we find it in, is of the Church of *Aquileia*, about 400 Years after Chriſt, and there it was expreſſed by deſcending *into the lower Parts*, but then the Word *buried* was omitted. Not long after, it was received into the *Roman* and *Oriental* Creeds, in which the *Burial* was retained, and, inſtead of *lower Parts*, was inſerted, *he deſcended into Hell.* What occaſioned the Inſertion of this Clauſe, was, the *Hereſy* of the *Apollinarians*, who maintained that our Lord, *in whom the Godhead dwelt bodily*, had no *human* rational Soul, but that all the *Offices* and Functions thereof were ſupplied by his *Divinity*. The *Arians* had, a long while before, advanced the ſame Doctrine, with a very ſmall Variation; but the great Character of *Apollinarius*, both for Piety and Learning, gave it a freſh *Currency*; and therefore ſeveral Fathers of the Church, apprehending dreadful Conſequences from the *Hereſy*, not only ſet themſelves to write againſt it, but (to apply a more effectual Remedy) introduced into the *Creed*, and demanded at *Baptiſm* this Clauſe of his *Deſcent into Hell*, whereby they underſtood (as will appear in the *Sequel)* that his Soul, being ſeparated from his Body, went into the uſual *Receptacle* of departed human Spirits, thoſe particularly that were *good*; and this they pitched upon, as the moſt pertinent and proper, becauſe it was thought the moſt *convincing* Proof of the *real Exiſtence* of our Saviour's *reaſonable* Soul. *Pearſon* on the Creed, *King*'s Hiſt. of it, *Edwards* and *Fiddes*'s Body, and *Burnet* on the Ch. Articles.

† Some Expounders of this Creed are of a quite contrary opinion, *viz.* that Chriſt's *Deſcent into Hell* was the firſt Step of his *Exaltation:* Accordingly they join in the ſame Article with his *Reſurrection*, and the Reaſon they give for this is, that he did not go thither, in order to *ſuffer* any Thing, but to begin his *Triumph* over Satan, and his Angels, to *ſubdue* them in their ſtrongeſt Hold and Fortreſs, and to take Poſſeſſion of that Part of his Kingdom, whereof God had given him *the Keys*; but this is all wrong Reaſoning, as will appear preſently, when the Notion of Chriſt's going into a *local Hell*, that he might ſpoil the Principalities and Powers thereof, ſhall come to be confuted. *Heylyn* on the Creed, and *King*'s Hiſt. of it.

(*a*) Eph. iv. 9. (*b*) 1 Pet. iii. 19. When I go a little farther, I ſhall have Occaſion to produce another, and more *modern* Interpretation of this Paſſage in the Apoſtle.

by he was *raiſed from the dead*, is plain from the *Context*; and that *the Spirits in Priſon* were the *antediluvian* People, appears from the *Deſcription*, which the Apoſtle gives of them, *viz.* that they *were diſobedient*, *i. e.* extremely wicked, according to the ſacred *Hiſtory*; that they lived in the *Days of Noah*, and in the Time, when he was *preparing the Ark:* Though therefore our bleſſed Lord, being then *in the Boſom of his Father*, did not appear upon Earth to preach *perſonally* to this old Generation of Sinners, yet this he might do, either by (*a*) *Enoch*, *the ſeventh from Adam*, who was a *Prophet*, or by *Noah*, *the eighth*, (*b*) who was a *Preacher of Righteouſneſs*, and, what he did by their Miniſtry, will bear the ſame Conſtruction, as if he had done it himſelf. So that, according to this *Explication*, our Saviour's *Deſcent* will meet with no Countenance from the Words of St. *Peter*.

But there is a Paſſage in the *Royal Pſalmiſt*, from whence this *Article* may be fairly deduced. (*c*) *I foreſaw the Lord alway before my Face*, ſays he, *for he is on my right Hand, that I ſhould not be moved; therefore did my Heart rejoice, and my Tongue was glad, moreover alſo my Fleſh ſhall reſt in Hope*, (*d*) *becauſe thou wilt not leave my Soul in Hell, neither wilt thou ſuffer thy holy One to ſee Corruption.* This St. *Peter* applies to our Saviour, and ſo endeavours to convince the *Jews*, that it could not, with any Propriety, be ſpoken of *David*, (*e*) *who, after he had ſerved his own Generation, by the Will of God fell on Sleep, and was laid with his Fathers, and ſaw Corruption; but, being a Prophet—he ſpake of the Reſurrection of Chriſt, that his Soul was not left in Hell, neither did his Fleſh ſee Corruption*; where his *Soul*, being put in Contradiſtinction to his *Fleſh* or Body, can mean nothing elſe, but his *intellectual* Part or human Soul; and it being affirmed of this Part, in the *Application* of the Words to our Saviour, that *it was not left in Hell*, this is an *Implication*, that it once was in Hell, and, by Conſequence, that Chriſt's Soul *deſcended* thither. The only Difficulty is, what we are to underſtand by the Word *Hell*, ſince the *Original* is known to have ſo many different Significations, beſides what obtains in common Converſation.

Various *Interpretations of the Word* Hell.

Now * *Scheol*, in the *Hebrew*, and *Hades* in the *Greek*, which our *Tranſlation* moſt commonly renders *Hell*, denote ſometimes the *Grave*; ſometimes the *State of the Dead*; ſometimes the *Infernal Regions*; ſometimes the *Torments*, that are there endured; and ſometimes a *Place*, appointed for the *Reception* of Souls, during the Time of their *Separation* from their Bodies: and from hence ariſes that great *Variety* of Opinions, concerning the true Interpretation of this Part of the *Article*. For

Not the Grave.

Some, meeting with Paſſages in Scripture, where theſe *original* Words are rendered the *Grave*, and then ſuppoſing, that where they are otherwiſe *tranſlated*, they may very properly bear the ſame Signification, have referred our Lord's *Deſcent* intirely to his *Body*, and ſo made the Senſe no more than this—*that his Body, after Death, was depoſited in the Grave:* and, to ſupport this Expoſition, (*f*) they tell us, that this Senſe is agreeable to St. *Peter*'s Deſign in quoting the Paſſage of the *Pſalmiſt*, which was only to prove the *Reality* of Chriſt's *Reſurrection*; agreeable to the *original* Intent of the *Pſalmiſt* himſelf, who, by an uſual Figure, a *Metonymy*, putting the Soul for the Body, means no more, than that God would not ſuffer his *corporeal* Part to be corrupted in the Grave; agreeable to the other Articles annexed to it, *viz.* his Crucifixion, Death, Burial, and Reſurrection,

* This *Hebrew* Word ſeems properly, and originally to denote the whole *Region*, protended downward, from the *Surface* of the Earth to a Depth indefinite, and inconceivable, vaſtly capacious in *Extenſion*, and very darkſome and deſolate in *Quality*, and therefore called the *Pit*, the *Abyſs*, the *Depths of the Earth*. This was the general Notion of Mankind; as we learn from that of *Heſiod*.

As far as Earth from Heaven diſtant is,
So far from Earth is the dark Tartarus.

And, in Conformity hereunto, we find the holy Scripture oppoſing it to Heaven, not only in *Situation*, but in *Dimenſion* and *Diſtance*; as when *Job*, ſpeaking of the Unſearchableneſs of the divine Perfections, ſaith, *it is as high as Heaven, what canſt thou do? deeper than Hell, what canſt thou know*, xvii. 13. and the Prophet *Amos*, ſpeaking of God's Almighty Power, *though they dig to Hell, thence ſhall mine Hand take them; though they climb up into Heaven, thence will I bring them down*, ix. 2. *Barrow* on the Creed.

(*a*) Jude 14. (*b*) 2 Pet. ii. 5. (*c*) Pſalm xvi. 8, &c. (*d*) Acts xiii. 36. (*e*) Acts ii. 29. (*f*) *Edwards*'s Body Vol. I.

ſurrection, which can have *Relation* to no other Part of him, but his Body only; agreeable to the Obſervation made by *Ruffinus*, that his *Deſcent into Hell*, firſt found in the *Aquileian* Creed (where his *Burial* was omitted) anſwered the Meaning of his *Burial*, as it was expreſſed in *others*, and agreeable to our Lord's *Promiſe*, to the *penitent Thief*, which muſt have *hindered* his Soul from *going down into Hell*, becauſe it was *engaged* to be with *him in Paradiſe*. It is to be obſerved however, that, as St. *Peter*, in applying the Words of the *Pſalmiſt* to our Saviour, makes a plain Diſtinction between his *Soul* and his *Fleſh*, his Soul and Body, as thus ſet in Oppoſition to each other, can, by no Figure of Speech, be brought to ſignify the ſame Thing; that, thoſe, who firſt put theſe Words, *he deſcended into Hell*, into the *Apoſtle's Creed*, where the *Burial* was expreſſed before, muſt needs underſtand them of a *Deſcent*, quite different to that of his Body into the Grave, otherwiſe, as the Difference between being *buried*, and *laid in the Grave*, is not conceivable; Chriſt's *deſcending into Hell* muſt certainly, in this Senſe, be a needleſs *Repetition* of what went before, which, in a *ſhort Summary* of Faith, is highly incongruous; and therefore the *right* Expoſition of the Words can hardly be this.

Not the State *of the Dead.*

OTHERS have imagined, that, by Chriſt's *Deſcent into Hell*, we are to underſtand his *Continuance* for ſome Time (*i. e.* during the Separation of his Soul and Body,) in the *State* or Condition of *Men that are dead*. But this is a Notion (as (*a*) one obſerves) wholly *new*, unknown to the ancient Fathers, and all *heathen* Authors, who never uſed the Word *Hades* in this Senſe, but always for a Place, or *Lodge* appointed for departed Souls, however they might differ about the particular Situation of it. Though therefore it be certainly true, that Chriſt did properly *die*, and, after his Expiration, was *in the State* and Condition of the dead, yet *this* having been mentioned before in the Creed, will again occaſion a Tautology (which, for the Reaſon abovementioned, is highly improper) unleſs we had *Nicety* enough to diſtinguiſh between *dying*, and *deſcending into the State of the dead*, which, in my Opinion, is a Matter of no ſmall Difficulty. As therefore we may reaſonably ſuppoſe, that the firſt *Inſerters* of this Part of the Article intended ſomething more by it, than what had been mentioned before, we can, by no means, admit of this *Notion*, as a proper Interpretation of it.

Not Hell *in a* literal,

OTHERS, taking the Words of the Creed intirely in a *literal* Senſe, and applying them to our Saviour's Soul, do thence infer, that, upon its Separation from the Body, it went down directly into thoſe *lower Parts*, which are the proper Habitation of all wicked Spirits, whether *human* or *diabolical*, and where they are detained in Cuſtody, until they are brought forth to Judgment; and, for the Support of this Opinion, they affirm, that this is the *genuine* Senſe of the Words of the Creed, and found in the Writings of the ancient Fathers; as it is the Doctrine of our *own*, and other *proteſtant* Churches, and confirmed to us by many ſtrong and weighty *Reaſons*. This Part of the *Allegation* I ſhall have occaſion to take notice of hereafter: at preſent I need only obſerve, that, as we are to receive no Doctrine, as an *Article of Faith*, but what we find recorded in the holy Scriptures, the Authority of no *Church*, much leſs the Credit of any private *Doctor*, has Power to impoſe it upon us, as ſuch: and therefore, ſince we no where find any Mention made of Chriſt's *literal Deſcent into Hell* in thoſe Writings, that we receive as the *Rule* of our Faith, we are at Liberty, if we pleaſe, to *reject* it: and good Reaſon indeed we have to reject it; (*b*) ſince it is hardly conceivable, how ſo memorable a *Tranſaction*, as this, would have been paſſed over in Silence by the *Evangeliſts*, and other ſacred Writers, without giving us the leaſt *Hint* of it, eſpecially, when, in treating of his Death, Burial, and Reſurrection, it laid ſo fairly in their Way, that they could ſcarce have eſcaped it, had there been any Thing of Truth or Reality in it.

Or figurative *Senſe.*

NOT widely different from *this* however has been the Opinion of (*c*) others, who have imagined, that this *Deſcent into Hell* is to be underſtood, in a *figurative* and *analogical* Senſe, of the *Wrath* of God due for Sin, and of the *Terrors* and *Horrors* of Guilt, which Chriſt bore in his *Soul*, beſides the *Torments*, which he

(*a*) *Pearſon* on the Creed. (*b*) *Burnet* on the Articles. (*c*) Vid. *Calvin's* Inſtit.

he suffered in his *Body*; and that this Wrath of God, and its fearful Effects, being equal to the *Pains of Hell*, might, in a large Way of Expression, be called a *Descent into it*. It is to be observed however, (*a*) that the Sufferings of Christ (whether *properly*, or only *metaphorically* infernal) were antedecent to his Death, Part of them in the *Garden*, and *Part* on the *Cross*, but all before his *Expiration*, and ought therefore, in the *Order* of our *Confession*, to have been mentioned *before*, and not *after* his Death, and Burial; That, as *figurative* Expressions are particularly to be avoided in a *plain* Declaration of Faith, where all the other Terms are *literally* to be understood, there is Reason to suspect an *Interpretation*, that goes upon that View; and that, as our Saviour could not possibly suffer such *Remorse* of Conscience, and endless *Despair* of God's Favour, as are properly the Torments of the Damned, no Opinion, that has a *Tendency* that Way, is fit to be countenanced.

But the common Mansion *of departed* Souls.

I mention but one *Opinion* more, which to me seems to have the best Pretensions to Truth, and in Effect is this—That our blessed Saviour's *reasonable* Soul, the better, and immortal Part of his *Humanity*, after a true and proper Separation by Death, went into a Place appointed for the common *Mansion* of departed Spirits, and there continued, until the Time of its *Re-union* with his Body, which was then in the *Grave*, and hereupon underwent a *proper* Resurrection.

This shewn to be the right *Interpretation.*

This gives us a right *Exposition* of the Prophesy, *thou will not leave my Soul in Hell*, upon which the Article is *founded*, and makes the Sense of it, as applied to our Saviour, to be this—— "Though I am to die, and, while my "Body is buried in the Grave, my "Soul is to go (according to the Man- "ner of all Mankind) into the *invisible* "*Regions* of the dead, the proper Place "of separated Spirits, yet will it not "long be detained there. In thy good "appointed Time, it will return to my "Body again, and, by thine almighty "Power, these two *essential* Parts of me "shall be reunited in a wonderful and "glorious Resurrection." This accounts for the *late* Reception of this Part of the Article into the Apostle's Creed, and that it was inserted in Opposition to the *Heresies* of the *Arians*, and *Apollinarians*, who denied the full *Perfection* of our Lord's *Humanity*, and asserted, that in him there was no Occasion for any *rational* Soul, since the Office of that was abundantly supplied by the powerful Inhabitation of the Deity. This informs us of the *real Existence* of our Saviour's human Soul, and what became of it after its *Dissolution*; for, since the Creed had told us so much concerning the *Disposal*, that was made of his Body, 'tis but reasonable to suppose, that some Notice should be given us of his *rational* and immortal Part, which subsisted after such Disunion, and, consequently, that his *descending into Hell*, which are the only Words, that can have any Relation to it, can properly admit of no other Construction. And this shews the Force and Propriety of that *Reasoning*, which the *catholick* Fathers used to urge against *Hereticks*, in Proof of the *Reality* of Christ's *reasonable* Soul from these very Words of the *Symbol*. For "(*b*) if *Christ descend-* "*ed into Hell, say they*, what was it of "him, that went thither? his *Divinity* "it could not be, for that is *Omnipre-* "*sent*; neither could it be his *Body*, for "that was committed to the Grave. It "remains therefore that it must neces- "sarily be his *Soul*, his rational and Im- "mortal Soul, since the Souls of *Brutes* "perish with their Bodies, and the *Spi-* "*rits* of Men only survive, and live in "a separate State." For these, and several other Reasons, that might be suggested, this seems to be the plain and proper *Exposition* of the Words; only we are to make good some *Suppositions*, upon which it may be thought to be founded.

For several Reasons.

(*c*) That the Soul of Man, when he dies, does not *vanish into the soft Air*, and become *extinct*, but, either by its *spiritual* Nature, or by the powerful *Will* of God, upholding and preserving it in *Being*, lives and exists after its Disunion from the Body, (*d*) is not only a *Tradition* generally received among all *civilized* heathen Nations, but abundantly confirmed by the *Testimony* of several *Passages*, both in the *old* and *new Testament*, as I shall have occasion very shortly to shew. That the Soul, thus existing in a separate

(*a*) *Pearson* on the Creed, and *Fiddes*'s Body Vol. I. (*b*) *King* on the Creed. (*c*) *Pearson* on the Creed. (*d*) Bp. *Bull*'s Ser. Vol. I.

ſeparate State from the Body, is really and truly in *ſome* Place; (*a*) not perhaps by Way of *Circumſcription*, (as proper Bodies are) but at leaſt by Way of *Determination*, is evident not only from its *finite* and limited Capacity, but from that Promiſe, which our Saviour makes his *penitent Companion* upon the Croſs, that his Soul, after Death, ſhould not wander about, and be loſt, but, under the Conduct of divine *Providence*, ſhould immediately arrive at * *Paradiſe*, the Abode of the *Bleſſed* departed this Life, where his Saviour's Soul, being gone before, ſhould be ready and glad to receive it. That there is a *Place* appointed by almighty God, in ſome *unknown* Region of the World, for the common Reception of *all* Souls, both good and bad, after their *Diſunion* from their Bodies; and that his *general* Place of Abode is † divided into *two* Manſions or Habitations, one for the Souls of the *wicked*, and the other for thoſe of the *godly*, where they live until the Time of a general Reſurrection, and *Call* to Judgment, differently affected with Pain or Joy, according to the Senſe of their different Behaviour in this Life, is plain from the Repreſentation, that our Lord has given us of the *rich Man* and *Lazarus* in the Parable. (*b*) *And it came to paſs, that the Beggar died, and was carried by Angels into* Abraham's *Boſom: The rich Man alſo died, and was buried: And in Hell* (in Hades) *he lift up his Eyes, being in Torments, and ſeeth* Abraham *afar off, and* Lazarus *in his Boſom. And he cried and ſaid, Father* Abraham, *have Mercy on me, and ſend* Lazarus, *that he may dip the Tip of his Finger in Water, and cool my Tongue, for I am tormented in this Flame. But* Abraham *ſaid, Son, remember, that thou, in thy Life Time, receiveds't thy good Things, and likewiſe* Lazarus *evil Things; but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.* (*c*) This is a Parable, 'tis true; and accordingly ſeveral Things in it are *parabolically* expreſſed; but though every Thing in a Parable be not *argumentative*, yet Divines of all Kinds do acknowledge, that the main *Scope* and Intendment of it certainly is. Now it plainly belongs to the very Scope and Deſign of this *Parable*, to ſhew, what becomes of the Souls of bad and good Men; and therefore, when *Lazarus* is here expreſly ſaid, preſently after his Death, to be *comforted* in *Abraham*'s *Boſom*, and the *rich Man*, immediately after his Death, to be *tormented in Hades*, the Words muſt be brought ſo near a *literal* Conſtruction, as to ſignify both the *diſtinct* Apartments of ſeparate Souls, and the *different* Treatment, they there meet with, according to the Virtues or Vices, that they *here* contracted. For we muſt obſerve, (*d*) that as our Saviour ſpeaks this Parable to the *Jews*, it muſt be expounded agreeably to the ancient *Cabala*, or Tradition received among them concerning the State of departed Spirits. What therefore our Saviour ſays of the Soul of *Lazarus*, that immediately after his Death, it was conveyed *by Angels into* Abraham's *Boſom*, the ſame we find was likewiſe the Belief of the *Jewiſh* Church, before our Saviour's Time, *viz.* that the Souls of the Faithful, when they die, are, by the *Miniſtry* of Angels, conducted to *Paradiſe*, where they are immediately placed in a bliſsful and happy State, while

From Scripture.

The Sentiments of the Jews.

* *Paradiſe* among the *Jews*, primarily ſignified the *Garden of Eden*, that bleſſed Garden, wherein *Adam*, in his State of Innocence, dwelt, by which (becauſe it was a moſt pleaſant and delightful Place) they were wont *ſymbolically* to repreſent the Place and State of Souls ſeparated from their Bodies, and waiting for the Reſurrection. Theſe they believed to be in a State of Happineſs, far exceeding all the Felicities of this Life, but yet inferior to that *conſummate* Bliſs, which follows the Reſurrection; and, accordingly, their ſolemn Wiſh (as the learned tell us from the *Talmudiſts*) concerning a departed Friend, was, *let his Soul be in the Garden of Eden*, or *let his Soul be gathered into the Garden of Eden*; and, in their Prayers for a dying Perſon, they uſed to ſay, *let him have his Portion in Paradiſe, and alſo in the World to come.* *Bull*'s Serm. Vol. I.

† The ſame Notion was generally received in the *Pagan Theology*: For *Virgil*, where, in Imitation of *Homer*'s eleventh Book of his *Odyſſes*, he makes his *Hero* go down into *Hell*, deſcribes two Paths in it, the *right* leading to the *Elyſian* Fields, or the Habitation of the *Bleſſed*, and the left leading to *Tartarus*, or the Place of the Damned, which according to our *Engliſh* Tranſlation is thus expreſſed.

——Here is a Place, where two Roads meet,
The right Hand leads unto great *Pluto*'s Palace
And to *Elyſium*: on the left are puniſhed
The bad, and a Road leads to *Tartarus*. Virg. Æn.. L. 6.

(*a*) *Pearſon* on the Creed. (*b*) Luke xvi. 22, &c. (*c*) *Bull*'s Ser. Vol. I. (*d*) Ibid.

while a contrary Fate attends the wicked. And therefore *Joſephus* delivers it as the general Character of all the *Jews* (except the *Sadducees*, who utterly denied all future Exiſtence) (*a*) *that they believed the Immortality of Souls, and that they were either tormented, or honoured under the Earth*, (i. e. in *Hell or Hades*) *according to the Virtue or Wickedneſs of their paſt Lives.*

And primitive Chriſtians.

WHAT Sentiments the primitive Chriſtians had of this Matter, we cannot but perceive, when we find them, from this very Parable, concluding, that (*b*) *all Sorts of Men, both good and bad, receive their deſerved Habitation, even before Judgment*; That (*c*) *they are all detained in one common Cuſtody, till the Time ſhall come, that the great Judge of all ſhall examine their reſpective Merits*; that (*d*) *the Souls of the Godly remain in a certain better Region, but unrighteous and wicked Souls in an evil one*; and (to comprize the Senſe of *all* in the Words of the Author of the *Queſtions* and *Anſwers* to the *Orthodox*) that *preſently after Death, the Righteous are ſeparated from the Wicked: For the Righteous are conveyed into Paradiſe, where they enjoy the Converſation and Sight of Angels, and Archangels, and of our Saviour Chriſt alſo by Way of Viſion, (according to what is ſaid,* (*e*) *when we are abſent from the Body, we are preſent with the Lord) but the Souls of the Unrighteous are carried to the infernal Regions* &c. *and they* (i. e. *both Sorts of Souls) are kept in their meet Places, till the Day of Reſurrection and Recompence.*

Chriſt's Soul going to the Manſions of the Righteous.

SINCE therefore the Doctrine both of *Jews* and *Chriſtians*, nay, I may add, of the * wiſeſt *Heathens* likewiſe, is plainly this—That there is a Place, ſomewhere or other, appointed for the common *Receptacle* of Souls, in their State of *Separation*, and in this Receptacle *Manſions* of different Kinds according to the *Quality* of the Souls, that are conveyed thither; and ſince our bleſſed Saviour's Soul, when diſunited from his Body, was, of Neceſſity, to go ſomewhere, and there to remain, until the Time of its *returning* to the Body, where could *that* be, but to the Place, where departed Spirits are accuſtomed to *reſort*; And, (*f*) as his Soul was the moſt *pure* and innocent one, that ever viſited the Regions of Death, to what *Society* of Spirits could it go, but to the *bleſſed*, who lived in Expectation of a *joyful* Reſurrection? and, as ſoon as he arrived there, (if we may allow our *Fancy* to repreſent the *Joy* of thoſe happy Spirits upon his Arrival) we may reaſonably preſume, that the *Patriarchs* received him with *aſtoniſhing* Gladneſs; that the *Prophets* entertained him with *extatick* Tranſports, and all the *wondering* Company heard him relate his Tranſactions upon Earth, and the many wonderful *Adventures* of his Love for their Salvation, with unſpeakable Joy and Admiration. Diſtreſſed *Captives* (ſays the *Author* I am quoting) cannot with more Joy receive their *Deliverer*, than theſe happy Spirits, impriſoned by Death, did admire their Saviour's Spirit, rely on his Merits, and expect complete Redemption from him: and in this Senſe St. *Peter*'s Words will bear a *probable* Interpretation; (*g*) *being put to Death in the Fleſh, but quickned in the Spirit, by which alſo he went, and preached unto the Spirits in Priſon.*

And for what Ends.

THESE therefore, we may well ſuppoſe, were ſome of the *Ends* of our Saviour's going, after Death, into the Place of departed Spirits; to give the holy *Fathers*, who died before his *Manifeſtation in the Fleſh*, the *Satisfaction* of enjoying his *Preſence* whom they, in their Life Time, ſo paſſionately deſired *to ſee*, and a farther Aſſurance of his bringing their Souls to a *Reunion* with their Bodies, and ſo completing for ever the moſt amazing Work of their Salvation. To *con-*

* *Plato* was deſervedly reckoned among theſe, and the Manner, in which he expreſſes his Sentiments about this Matter, is this——*thoſe, who have committed but ſmall Offences, wander about in a Region, near the Superficies of the Earth; thoſe, that have been grievous Sinners, are carried to live in a Place of great Tribulation; but thoſe, that have arrived at an eminent Pitch of Virtue, are tranſlated into a better Place.* This Notion, St. *Ambroſe* affirms, the *Pagans* ſtole from the *Jews*, and the Books of the old Teſtament, though he wiſhes, they had not mingled other *ſuperfluous* Conceits with it, but had contented themſelves with the ſingle Opinion,——*that Souls, delivered from their Bodies, go to Hades*, i. e. *a Place unſeen, which is called by the Latins*, Infernum de bono mortis. *Nichols* on the Articles, and *King*'s Hiſt. of the Creed.

(*a*) *Jewiſh* Antiq. L. 18. c. 2. (*b*) *Iræneus*, Lib. 5. cap. 31. (*c*) *Lactan* Inſt. Lib. 7. (*d*) *Juſtin* Martyr. Dial. cum Tryph. (*e*) 2 Cor. v. 8. (*f*) *Boyce* on the Art. (*g*) 1 Pet. iii. 18, 19.

form himſelf to the *Laws* of human Nature; and, (that he might in all Things *be made like unto us, Sin only excepted,*) as he was born, did die, and his Body was buried in the Grave, like other Men, ſo his Soul might be diſpoſed of in the *Regions* of Death, as the Souls of other Men are, and there continue for ſome Time, that (*a*) he might thence perceive what it was to be a *ſeparate* Soul, and ſo learn to *pity* us the more, when we come to die, and, upon our Paſſage into a State of *Diſunion*, the more to *provide* for our ſafe *Repoſe*, until the Time of our Reſurrection. To reap the *Firſt-fruits* of his paſt *Atchievements*, and, after he had (*b*) *fought the good Fight, and finiſhed his Courſe*, and perfected (*c*) the *Work, which God had given him to do*, that he might receive a *Foretaſte* of the Reward, which was ſet before him, in that *intermediate* State of Happineſs, which departed good Souls do enjoy. To (*d*) *ſanctify* the State of Separation, and make it more comfortable and joyful to us, in that he, who came into the World to ſave us, endured it before us, and, by taking away the *Curſe* on the *Croſs*, *Corruption* in the *Grave*, and *Death* in his *Deſcent to Hell*, has ſweetened every Condition, that his faithful Servants, whether living or dying, are appointed to undergo: And, laſtly, to ſupport the Spirits of all good Men with *ſtrong Conſolation*, and to revive them with theſe comfortable Thoughts, upon the Approach of Death; ——that it does not make an End of their *Being*, but only tranſlates them to a Place, where the *Captain of their Salvation* has been before them, to ſecure their *Paſſage*, and, by his own Example, to aſcertain their Return: (*e*) where they ſhall be gathered to the *Spirits of juſt Men*, of Saints, and excellent Perſons, whoſe Lives they have endeavoured to imitate; where there ſhall be no wicked Men to *ſeduce* them, no Devils to *tempt* them, no ſinful Fleſh to betray them; and where they ſhall be in full Security of their Salvation, and meet with nothing, but Joy, and yet more Joy ſtill in *Expectation*; and therefore, to conclude all in the excellent Words of St. *Cyprian*, exhorting the *Chriſtians* of his Age againſt the Fear of Death: "(*f*) Let us "embrace the Day," ſays he, "that aſſigns "to every one his Habitation; that deli-"vers us from theſe worldly Snares, and "reſtores us to the heavenly Kingdom. "Who, when abroad, would not haſten "to return to his own Country? Who, "haſtening to return home, would not "heartily wiſh for a good Gale, that he "might ſpeedily embrace his Friends? "We may reckon Paradiſe for our Coun-"try: We have begun already to have "the Patriarchs for our Parents; why "then do we not haſten, and run to ſee "our Country, and to ſalute our Parents? "A great Number of Friends expect us "there, a numerous Company of Parents, "Brethren, and Sons deſire to ſee us, al-"ready ſecure of their own Immortality, "but now ſollicitous about our Salvation. "—There is a glorious Choir of Apoſtles, "there is the Number of exulting Pro-"phets, there is the Company of Mar-"tyrs, crowned for the Victory of their "Fight and Paſſions;——there the tri-"umphant Virgins, who, by the Strength "of Continency, ſubdued the Concupiſ-"cence of the Fleſh and Body; and there "the charitable, who feeding, and giving "to the poor, and conveying their earthly "patrimony into the Treaſury of Heaven, "are rewarded for their Works of Righ-"teouſneſs. To theſe, dearly beloved "Brethren, let us haſten, and wiſh to be "ſpeedily with them, that ſo we may "ſpeedily come to Chriſt."

The OBJECTION.

"BUT whatever the *State* of thoſe "happy *Manſions* may be, to which "our Lord's *human* Soul, after it was diſ-"lodged from his Body, thought proper to "reſort; *Hell* ſeems to be the moſt *un-*"*lucky* Word in the World to expreſs it "by, ſince, in its very ſound, it carries "*Horror* and Affrightment, as being a "Place of exquiſite Pains and Torments, "of *weeping, and wailing, and gnaſhing* "*of Teeth for ever.* The Words of the "*Pſalmiſt* therefore, from whence the "*Phraſe* in the *Creed* is ſuppoſed to be "borrowed, ſeem to imply a Kind of "*Concern*

(*a*) *Boyce* on the Art. (*b*) 2 Tim. iv. 7. (*c*) John xvii. 4. (*d*) *King's* Hiſt. of the Apoſtles Creed. (*e*) Bp. *Bull's* Ser. Vol. I. (*f*) De Mortalit. Sect. 18.

" *Concern* and Uneaſineſs in him, upon " the Account of his Soul's Abode, and " that the only Conſideration, which made " his *Heart rejoice, and his Fleſh reſt in* " *Hope*, was, the Promiſe of God, that he " would not ſuffer him long to be *left* " there, but, in a ſhort Time, reſcue him " from that diſconſolate Place, which bad- " ly comports with the Notion we have of " a *Paradiſe:* Nor can we ſay, but that " the words of St. *Peter*, affirming, that " God, (*a*) by the *Reſurrection* of Chriſt, " had *looſened the Pains of Hades*, (as " ſome Copies read it) may give us juſt " *Umbrage* to ſuppoſe, that his Soul was " there made to undergo ſome Kind of " Suffering, from which he was not re- " leaſed, until the Time of its Reunion " with his Body. How much more *con-* " *gruous* is it then to think, that Chriſt's " Soul, in a literal Senſe, went down to " *Hell*, (*b*) to ſuffer the *ſame* Puniſhments, " that were due to the greateſt *Sinners*; " to grapple with *infernal* Powers, with " the Horrors of *eternal* Death, and to " ſuſtain to the full *the Severity of divine* " *Vengeance?* Or, ſuppoſing theſe *Pains* " did not affect Chriſt himſelf; yet ſince " thoſe, who died in their Sins, could not " but be involved, and detained, in them, " we cannot but conceive, that one *End* " of Chriſt's *deſcending* thither might be, " to deliver ſome wicked Souls *at leaſt* from " the Torments of it, and to repoſe them in a " State of Happineſs. For what more *glo-* " *rious* can we imagine, than that the Soul " of Chriſt ſhould conquer *Satan* and all the " *Powers* and *Principalities* below in their " own Dominion; ſhould break the *Sting* " of Death by his own Might, looſen the " *Bonds* of Hell, and rend in ſunder thoſe " *adamantine Bars*, which were made to " detain captive Spirits? What more " *triumphant*, than, by Virtue of this De- " ſcent, *to lead Captivity captive*, and, " like a true *Conqueror*, to give to the " Souls of *Patriarchs*, *Prophets*, and all " the People of God, not only a *Reſcue* " and Deliverance from the Place and " State, they were in, but a *Tranſlation* " likewiſe into the celeſtial *Paradiſe*, and " the *beatific* Viſion of God? And what " Deſign more *gracious* and beneficial can " poſſibly be deviſed, than (*c*) to *proclaim* " *Liberty to the Captives*, and *to open the* " *Priſon to them that were bound*, as the " *Prophet* expreſſes it; or, in the Senſe " of the *Apoſtle*, to *preach* the Doctrine " of Salvation to *all*, that were detained " in the *Regions of Death*, that thoſe, " who had never heard of it before, might " be made Partakers of the *glad Tidings* " of the Goſpel, and thoſe, who had " heard and believed, might have the *Be-* " *nefits* of it aſcertained to them, in a " publick and *authentick* Manner, by " Chriſt's own Appearance among them. " Theſe are noble *Ends*, and this cer- " tainly was once the Doctrine of the " Church of *England*, as appears by her " *Articles* and *Homilies:* And the *Tran-* " *ſlators* of her Creed muſt be ſtrangely " defective in the *Propriety* of *Diction*, if " ever they intended to make *Hell* ſtand " for *Paradiſe*, and *deſcend* a proper Term " for *removing* to a Place, which is gene- " rally ſuppoſed to be in the Regions " *above.* If however this *novel* Interpre- " tation is to take Place, it is highly ex- " pedient, for the Prevention of Error, " and Miſconception among the *vulgar*, " that the *Tranſlation* ſhould likewiſe be " *altered*, and, inſtead of *he deſcended* " *into Hell*, any Thing, that ſuits it bet- " ter, ſhould be ſubſtituted in its Room."

(*d*) HELL indeed, in our preſent *Language*, and as it is made Uſe of in common Speech, does now always denote the *State of the damned*; but, in former Times, it bore another Signification. It is originally *Saxon*, and derived from the Word *hil*, which ſignifies to *hide*, and, from the Participle *helled*, comes *hidden*, or *covered*; for ſo, in the *Weſtern* Parts of *England*, to this very Day, to *hele* over any Thing, among the common People, ſignifies to *cover it*, and therefore he, that covereth an Houſe with Tile, Slate, or Thatch, is called an *Hellier*. From whence it appears, that the Word *Hell*, according to its *primitive* Notion, exactly anſwers the *Greek Hades:* And therefore we may obſerve, that, no longer ago, than the *old* Tranſlation of *Pſalms*, (which is ſtill retained in our *Common-Prayer Book*) it was uſed in this *general* Acceptation. For when we read, (*e*) *what Man is he, that liveth, and ſhall not ſee Death? Shall he deliver his Soul from the Hand of Hell?* as all Souls do not go to the Place of the damned, *Hell* muſt here be underſtood, as the general Repoſitory of ſeparate

Anſwered by ſhewing the original Meaning of the Word Hell.

(*a*) Acts ii. 24. (*b*) *Calvin*'s Inſtit. (*c*) Iſai. lxi. 1. (*d*) *King* and *Townſon* on the Creed. (*e*) Pſal. lxxxix. 48.

ſeparate Spirits, or otherwiſe the Words of the Pſalmiſt would not be true.

And the Uſe made of the Word Hades.

Now *Hades* is the Word, which the *Septuagint Verſion* moſt commonly puts for the *Hebrew Sheol:* But then, as they borrowed it at firſt from ancient *Greek* Writers, there is no Doubt to be made, but that they always employed it in the very ſame Senſe, that it was known to bear in the Authors, from whom they took it, and this every *School-boy*, from his *Homer* or *Heſiod*, will tell us, was no other, than a Place of Reception for the Souls, that had departed this Life, and were gone into another State.

FROM the *ſeventy Tranſlators* the Writers of the *New Teſtament* adopted the Word, and, accordingly, applied it to the ſame Senſe: For, though (*a*) in our Verſion, *Hell* ſometimes denotes the *infernal Regions*, and ſometimes only the *State of the dead* in general, yet this *Ambiguity* is in our Language, and not in the *Original:* For, where the Place of wicked Souls is ſpoken of, the Word *Hell* in the Original is *Gehennah*; where only the State of the dead is intended, it is always expreſſed by *Hades*, i. e. an *inviſible Place*, removed from the Sight and View of the living. From the *ſacred Penmen* the ancient *Writers* of the *Church* received the Word; and, under the ſame Signification, it continued a *conſiderable* Time, until the Uſe of the *Greek* Tongue came to *decline*, and then, beginning to be underſtood in a *bad* Senſe, it was chiefly applied to the Place and Condition of wicked Souls departed; and in this *Æra* it was, that the Notion of Chriſt's going down to the *Manſions* of the damned, not to ſuffer their Puniſhment, but to triumph over the Devil, to break the brazen Gates of Hell, and to bring away the *captive* Spirits from thence, almoſt generally prevailed.

(*b*) IN the *ſeventh Century* ſome new Notions were ſtarted concerning the *different Degrees* of Puniſhment in *Hell*, and the different Receptacles aſſigned to Souls, according to their different Deſerts; and, in Conſequence of this, *Hell* was ſuppoſed to be marked out into ſeveral *Circles*, at a nearer, or farther Diſtance from the *central* Fire. The *higheſt* was the Place of *Devils*, and wicked Souls departed; the moſt *remote*, the Habitation of *good* Spirits; the Spaces, or Rooms between theſe Circles were called *Limbi*, or Borders, and the moſt outward Border being aſſigned for the Reception of the Fathers before the Coming of Chriſt, had the Name of *Limbus Patrum* given it.

AT the Time of the *Reformation*, thoſe, who took in Hand to rectify the Abuſes of Religion, very juſtly laid aſide theſe idle *Fancies*, taken up by Divines of the *middle* Ages, but without any Manner of Foundation in Scripture: They retained however the ſame Notion of *Hades*, as the Place of wicked Souls, in their State of Separation, in which the Divines of our Church ſeem to have agreed, until it came to be controverted by Men of Learning and Sagacity, and then the great Dr. *Hammond*, in his *Practical Catechiſm*, having explained the Word *Hell* by the common *Place* and State of the *dead*, and being followed therein by Biſhop *Pearſon*, in his elaborate *Expoſition of the Creed*, their Authority has been a Means to *revive* the true Signification of the Word, and to give it a general Sanction.

The Happineſs of departed Souls imperfect.

THIS ſhort *Account* of the Progreſs of the Word *Hades*, and of the true Original of the Word *Hell*, are enough to convince us, that our *Tranſlators* of the *Creed*, when they made uſe of the Word *Hell*, meant it, in * its *primary* Senſe, for the common *Repoſitory* of departed Souls, until the *Reſurrection-*

(*a*) *Clarke*'s Ser. Vol. V.

(*b*) *Nichols* on the Ch. Articles.

* To this Purpoſe ſome have obſerved, that, whenever the Place of the damned is ſpoken of, the Word *Hell*, in the Original, is always *Gehennah*; but, when only the Place of the dead in *general*, it is always expreſſed by *Hades*, which is a quite different Word. Thus, when our Lord tells us of him, who *calls his Brother Fool without Cauſe*, that *he ſhall be caſt into Hell Fire*, Matt. v. 22. and of him, who does not *cut off his Right-hand, and pluck out his right Eye, when they offend him*, or cauſe him to ſin, *ſhall be caſt into Hell*, ver. 29. when he aſks the *Scribes*, and *Phariſees*, how they *can eſcape the Damnation of Hell?* Matt. xxiii. 33. and tells them, that, when they had *gained a Proſelyte*, they *made him twofold more the Child of Hell, than themſelves*, ver. 15. when he *characterizes* God, as one, who *was able to deſtroy both Body and Soul in Hell*, Matt. x. 28. and, of a wicked and malicious Tongue, *which ſetteth on Fire the Courſe of Nature*, St. *James* pronounceth, that *it is ſet on Fire of Hell*, iii. 6. in all theſe Paſſages, I ſay, the Word *Hell* is, in the *Original*, *Gehennah*, which always ſignifies the State of the damned: But, in other Places, where we, in our Rendering, ſtill make uſe of the ſame Word *Hell*, the Original has *one*, which ſignifies only the *inviſible State*, or State of the dead in general. Thus when our Lord tells us of *Capernaum*, *that it ſhould be brought down*

surrection-day; not without a particular View to the blessed *Mansions* of it, where the Souls of the righteous (with whom our Saviour's is supposed to have mixed) until their final Consummation, live in a *real*, though *imperfect* State of Happiness. I call it *an imperfect State of Happiness*: (*a*) For, though the Souls of holy Men, immediately after their Departure hence, are in Joy and Felicity, yet must their Felicity be looked upon as incomplete, so long as their Bodies are disunited from them. For since the Body is Part of the Man, which, together with the Soul, makes up one entire Person, so long as the Body is separated from the Soul, and held under Corruption, so long the Happiness of that Person, how great soever in other Respects, must certainly, in *this*, be imperfect and defective.

Which might create some Uneasiness.

WELL therefore might our Saviour's Soul, in a State of Happiness, which could not be *complete* without its Reunion with his Body, be supposed to comfort itself with the Hope of not being long detained in it; since, even in this Life, the Apprehension of our Souls and Bodies being lodged in different Places, and debarred from the full Fruition of their joint Felicity, is apt to affect the very best of Men: For (*b*) *we know, that the whole Creation* (i. e. all Mankind) *groaneth, and travaileth in Pain together, until now; and not only they, but we ourselves also, who have the First fruits of the Spirit, even we our selves groan within ourselves, waiting for the Adoption, to wit, the Redemption of our Body:* And well might the *Souls under the Altar*, that had for some Time been kept in this State of Separation, be introduced, as *crying with a loud Voice, and saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge, and avenge our Blood on them, that dwell on the Earth?* Or, (as it is in the apocryphal Book of *Esdras*) (*c*) *How long shall we hope in this Fashion? When cometh the Fruit of the Flower of our Reward?* (*d*) *And white Robes were given unto every one of them, and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet a little Season.* They were then in an happy Condition without all Peradventure; and yet the *Suspension* of the Time of their Resurrection, and of their Admission to the full Possession of their Beatitude, may be supposed to create in them some *longing Desires*, if not Regret and Uneasiness.

God's loosing the Pains *of Hell relates neither to* Christ's, *nor any* other *Souls.*

IT was purely therefore, from a Sense of the *Imperfection* of a separate State, and not any *Apprehension* of *Torments* to be undergone there, that Christ may be said to have *dreaded* a *Dereliction* in it. The Torments of separate Spirits detained in Hell, such as Remorse of Conscience, a Sense of God's Rejection, and an utter Despair of ever regaining his Favour, or finding any Mitigation of their Pains; these (as we hinted before) are what the Soul of Christ was not capable of *suffering*; for where there is no Sin, and no Guilt, there can be no Compunction, no Remorse, no Fear of Reprobation, no Foundation for Despair. So that if God did not *loosen the Pains* of Hell (even taking the Word in that Sense) upon Christ's *Account*, there is little Reason to imagine, that he would do it for the Sake of *wicked* Spirits, that were imprisoned there, because the Souls of Men were never cast into *infernal* Torments, (which are therefore called (*e*) *everlasting Fire, everlasting Punishment*, and *the Worm that never dieth*) that they might be delivered from them. St. *Peter* tells us of *ungodly Spirits, (f) that they are reserved unto the Day of Judgment, to be punished*, in like Manner as

down to Hell, Matt. xi. 23. his Meaning is, that that great and proud City should be levelled with the Dust, and as utterly disappear, as those, who had long been buried in the *Grave*. When of his *Church* he promises, that *the Gates of Hell should not prevail against it*, Mat. xvi. 18. he intends only, that even *Death itself* (which is the utmost *Extent* of all *Persecution*) shall never be able to extinguish his Religion, which is to abide, as long as the World endures. When, in the *Prophecy* concerning the End of the World, it is declared that *Death and Hell delivered up the dead, that were in them*; and that, after the Judgment, *Death and Hell were cast into the Lake of Fire*, Rev. xx. 13, 14. it is evident, that *Hell* here signifies the *State of departed Souls in general*, from whence all shall be summoned at the Day of Judgment, and, after that Judgment is over, that State of Death, or Death itself, shall then be no more. And, lastly, when the rich Man *in Hell lift up his Eyes, being in Torments*, it is intimated only in *general*, that he was in that *invisible Place*, whither the Souls of all Men, at their Death, do resort, but in that *particular Quarter* of it, where the wicked, and not the righteous, were confined: From whence it is evident, that though these Words both of them, in our Language, are translated *Hell*, yet, in their *Original*, they bear a very different Signification. *Clarke*'s Ser. Vol. V. and *Johnson*'s Ser. Vol. II.

(*a*) *Heylyn* on the Creed. (*b*) Rom. viii. 22, 23. (*c*) 2 Esdras iv. 35. (*d*) Rev. vi. 10, 11. (*e*) Matt. xxv. 41, 46. and Mark ix. 44. (*f*) 2 Pet. ii. 9, 4.

apoſtate Angels are *delivered into Chains of Darkneſs, to be reſerved unto Judgment*; and therefore we have the ſame Reaſon to believe, that, in Virtue of Chriſt's Deſcent into Hell, Devils were, ſaved and reſcued from their Torments, as thoſe Souls, which are under the ſame Condemnation, and in the ſame Place tormented with them.

The true meaning of the Phraſe.

THE *original* Word however in St. *Peter*'s Sermon (according to the (*a*) beſt and moſt authentick *Copies*) imports no ſuch Word, as *Hell*. The Apoſtle is there telling the *Jews* very roundly, that, though they, *with wicked Hands, had crucified and ſlain* Jeſus *of* Nazareth, yet God had *raiſed him up* from the Grave, *having looſened the Pains of Death*, becauſe *it was not poſſible, that he*, (*b*) *who had Life in himſelf*, and (*c*) a Promiſe of a ſpeedy Reſurrection, *ſhould be holden of it*; ſo that it was the *Bands of Death* which at Chriſt's Reſurrection were diſſolved, and not the *Pains of Hell*, from which any Souls were delivered, that the *Apoſtle* makes the *Topick* of his Diſcourſe, in the Place, now under Conſideration,

That Chriſt did not go to Hell to conquer *Satan.*

TO conquer and triumph over *Satan*, and his infernal *Powers*, may be thought a great *End* of Chriſt's *deſcending into Hell*; but the (*d*) Paſſage in Scripture, upon which that Notion is thought to be founded, refers us to his *Victory* over them on the *Croſs* (as plainly appears by the Words in the foregoing Verſe) and not to any *Defeat* given them in their own *Territories*: For, as *he blotted out the Hand-writing of Ordinances, that was againſt us, nailing it to his Croſs*; ſo it is affirmed of him, that *he ſpoiled Principalities and Powers, triumphing over them on the ſame Croſs*, which made ſome of the Ancients ſay, that the Croſs of Chriſt was not only the Place, in which the Victory over *Satan* was obtained, but the *Trophy* likewiſe of that Victory, and (as others expreſs it) his *glorious and triumphal Chariot*. However this be, 'tis certain, that all the Agonies and Sufferings of our bleſſed Lord, both in Body and Soul, which were any Way conducive to our *Redemption*, and, conſequently, the Deſtruction of the Devil's Kingdom, were accompliſhed on the Croſs: and therefore, when we hear him ſay, (*e*) *it is finiſhed*, at the ſame Time *he gave up the Ghoſt*, not ſurely to be ſent to the Place of the *Damned*, there to undergo *freſh* Pains, and more Difficulties; for *three Days together to wage War with the infernal Powers; to batter their Strength; to clear the Priſon of Hell, and to bring away the Jailor himſelf in Chains* (as ſome delight to ſpeak) but rather to be conducted into a Place of Eaſe, and Tranquillity, and ſweet Repoſe, where (*f*) *the Souls of the Righteous are in the Hand of God*, and where *no Torment* of any Kind can approach *to touch them*.

Not to deliver the Patriarchs.

AND for this Reaſon there ſeems to be no Manner of Occaſion for Chriſt's Spirit to deſcend into Hell, in order to deliver the Souls of the Patriarchs, and Prophets, and other good Men from thence; becauſe * *Abraham's Boſom* is generally thought to have been the Repoſitory of the Saints of old, and *Abraham*'s Boſom was never yet accounted any Manſion of the infernal Regions. The Place indeed, where (*g*) *the rich Man* after Death is ſaid to be in *Torments*, is called *Hell*; but that, into which the *Angels* carried the *poor Man's* Soul was ſituated at a vaſt *Diſtance*; nor can we imagine, that theſe bleſſed *miniſtring Spirits*, who always *behold the Face of God*, ſhould be ſent from Heaven to convey the Souls of the Righteous into a Place, where the Face of God is never to be ſeen. (*h*) Unleſs therefore it could be proved, that the Souls of the *Patriarchs*, and other juſt Men were kept in ſome Place, which might properly be termed *Hell*; and unleſs it were certain, that they are now in another Place,

* The Place of virtuous departed Souls was commonly called *Abraham*'s *Boſom*, becauſe the *Jews* had ſo great a Veneration for *Abraham*, and that *deſervedly*, for his eminent Faith and Obedience, that they gave him the *firſt* Place among the bleſſed, and hence is that Expreſſion of *ſitting down with* Abraham, *and* Iſaac, *and* Jacob *in the Kingdom of Heaven*, Matt. viii. 11. To be in *Abraham*'s Boſom then was in *Alluſion* to the Cuſtom of Feaſts among the *Jews*, where the moſt eſteemed and beloved *Gueſt* ſat next him, that was *Chief* at the Feaſt, and leaned on his Boſom. For this Reaſon St. *John* is called the *Diſciple, whom Jeſus loved*, becauſe, when he ſat at Meat, he *leaned on his Boſom*, John xiii. 25. and, to ſignify his Dearneſs to his heavenly Father, our Saviour expreſſes himſelf in this Wiſe——*no Man hath ſeen God at any Time, the only begotten Son, who is in the Boſom of the Father, he hath declared him*, John. i. 18. *Tillotſon*'s Works. Vol. III.

(*a*) *Pearſon* on the Creed. (*b*) John v. 26. (*c*) Acts ii. 27. (*d*) Col. ii. 14, 15. (*e*) John xix. 30. (*f*) Wiſd. iii. 1. (*g*) Luke xvi. 23, &c. (*h*) *Pearſon* on the Creed.

Place, and in a better Condition, than they enjoyed before Chriſt's coming in the Fleſh (of which there is not the leaſt Intimation in holy Writ) all that is ſaid of this Matter (from what Quarter ſoever it comes) muſt be looked upon as mere Fancy, and a groundleſs Fiction. As therefore (*a*) it was on the *Croſs*, that Chriſt triumphed over Death and Satan, ſo (*b*) *his leading Captivity captive* was not effected, till after his *Aſcenſion*, when he (*c*) *had the Keys of Hades and Death* committed to his keeping, and when, by pouring out his *holy Spirit* upon his Diſciples, he enabled them to caſt out Devils, and to (*d*) *turn Men from Darkneſs to Light, and from the Power of Satan unto God.*

Not to preach *the* Goſpel.

THERE is one Reaſon more, commonly aſſigned for Chriſt's Deſcent to the *infernal* Regions, in which our Church formerly ſeemed to agree, and that is, (*e*) that he *might preach to the Spirits in Priſon, or in Hell, as the Place in* St. *Peter teſtifieth.* But (to give a *farther* Interpretation of the Words of that *Apoſtle*) the very *Order*, in which they are delivered, is this——firſt (*f*) *Chriſt was put to Death*, then *he was quickned and roſe again*, and, after that, *he went, and preached:* ſo that it is impoſſible his *preaching* ſhould have any *Relation* to Souls in *Hell*, unleſs we make his *Deſcent* thither to be ſubſequent to his *Reſurrection*, which is a Thing, that was never yet dreamt of. By the *Spirits in Priſon* therefore there can be no Difficulty in meaning ſuch *Perſons*, as were detained in the *Bond of Iniquity*, and were *Idolaters* and *Unbelievers*, whether among the *Jews* or *Heathens*, becauſe, to * repreſent Wickedneſs by *Bonds*, Impriſonment, or Captivity, is one of the moſt eaſy and familiar *Metaphors*, that we meet with in Scripture. By Chriſt's *going and preaching to them* however need not be underſtood his *perſonal* Appearance, but what his Apoſtles, and other Chriſtians did, after his *Reſurrection*, nay, after his *Aſcenſion*, when, by the Gifts of the *Holy Ghoſt*, they were qualified to *propagate* his Goſpel all the World over. What Chriſt did by his Miniſters may properly enough be aſcribed to himſelf: but how the preaching of the *Apoſtles* to the unbelieving *Jews* and *Gentiles*, is applicable to *(g) the Spirits in Priſon, on whom the long Suffering of God waited, in the Days of* Noah, *while the Ark was preparing*, this is the Queſtion. But this Difficulty may eaſily be ſolved, if, in the Paſſage before us, we do but ſuppoſe, that there is an *Ellipſis*, or *leaving out a Word*, † a Figure very common in Scripture, and therefore not to be rejected here, and then the Words are, —— *by which he went and preached to the Spirits in Priſon, who were ſome time diſobedient*, as *when once the long Suffering or Patience of God waited, in the Days of* Noah; where, by the *Inſertion* of the Word [as] the Apoſtle's meaning is made clear, and the Compariſon, he intends, is to this Effect—"(*h*) As "God heretofore ſhewed an *extraordina-* "*ry* Patience and Mercy to the People "of the old World, by giving them the "Space

* For ſo the wicked is ſaid to *be holden with the Cords of his Sins*, Prov. v. 22. to be *in the Bond of Iniquity*, Acts viii. 23. and to be *taken captive by Satan at his Will*, 2 Tim. ii. 26. Nay, the Evangelical Prophet *Iſaiah*, ſpeaking of the bleſſed Deſign of Chriſt's coming, tells us, that it was *to open the Priſon to them, that were bound*, lxi. 1. *To ſay to the Priſoners, go forth*, xlix. 9. and to *bring the Priſoners out of Priſon, and them, that ſat in Darkneſs, out of the Priſon Houſe*, xlii. 7. by which he means no more, than that the End of his coming was to *ſeek, and to ſave that which was loſt*, to *bleſs us in turning us from our Iniquities*, and reſcuing us from the Bondage of Sin and Satan. *Edwards* on difficult Texts.

† That this *leaving out* of a Word is very frequent in the holy Scriptures, we may ſatisfy ourſelves from thoſe *Writers*, who have made it their Buſineſs to treat of the *Stile* and *Phraſeology* of the Bible; and that this particular *Particle* AS has been oft ſupplied in the *Tranſlation*, where it was omitted in the *Original*, will appear from theſe Inſtances. Thus in Pſal. xi. 1. *flee* as *a Bird unto the Mountain*, in Pſ. xii. 6. *the Words of the Lord are pure Words*, as *Silver tried in the Furnace*, and Pſ. xxii. 13. *they gaped upon me*, as *a ravening and roaring Lion*; Our *Tranſlators* thought it requiſite to ſupply the Senſe with an *as*, though this Particle be not in the *Original*. And, in like Manner, in Gen. xlix. 9. *Judah is a Lion's Whelp.* in Pſ. xlv. 1. *My Tongue is the Pen of a ready Writer*, the *comparative* Particle *as* is underſtood, even as in Cant. i. 15. *thy Eyes are Doves* (for ſo it is in the *Hebrew*) the Meaning, without Doubt, is, *as Doves*, i. e. as *Doves Eyes*. So that, if this Particle *as* is thought proper to be added in other Places, to make the Senſe *complete*, there is the ſame Reaſon to have it ſupplied here *Edwards* on difficult Texts.

(*a*) Col. ii. 15. (*b*) Eph. iv. 8. (*c*) Rev. i. 18. (*d*) Acts xxvi. 18. (*e*) Vid. *Articles* publiſhed in 1552, being the fourth Year of *Edward the ſixth*. (*f*) 1 Pet. iii. 18, 19. (*g*) Ver. 20. (*h*) *Edwards* on difficult Texts, Part I.

" Space of 140 Years to repent in, which " almoſt all *neglected*, except a *few* Per- " ſons, who gave Ear to the divine *Ad-* " *monitions*, and ſo eſcaped the Deſtruction " of the *Flood*; ſo Chriſt was pleaſed to " give Proof of his ſingular Kindneſs to- " wards the diſobedient *Jews* and *Gen-* " *tiles*, to whom he ſent his Apoſtles, to " reclaim them from their wicked Cour- " ſes, and call them to Repentance; but " they, rejecting this Meſſage, continued " in their Wickedneſs, *all*, except a ſelect " Number, who, having embraced the " chriſtian Profeſſion, were ſaved by *Bap-* " *tiſm*, even as a few *Antediluvians* were " preſerved by the Ark." This gives the Senſe of the Apoſtle's Words quite a different *Turn*, and vacates the *Neceſſity* of Chriſt's going to *Hell* to preach the Goſpel; as very juſtly it may: for, beſides that the *Goſpel* is a Diſpenſation, no Ways adapted to the Condition of the *Deceaſed*, if the *Deceaſed* were *holy* and *righteous* Souls, all *preaching* to them would be *needleſs*, becauſe, long before Chriſt's coming to them, their State was determined, and ſome Part, at leaſt, of the Recompence of their Reward was aſcertained to them; and if they were *wicked* and *impenitent* Souls, all preaching to them would be *uſeleſs*, becauſe their Fate was *irreverſible*, and upon them was the *Decree* paſſed, (*a*) *he that is unjuſt, let him be unjuſt ſtill, he that is filthy, let him be filthy ſtill.*

A Cenſure *on our* Church *in Relation to this Point.*

OUR Church was therefore in a very great *Error*, when ſhe determined the Senſe of (*b*) the Article, relating to this Point, upon a *Text* of Scripture *obſcure* in itſelf, and of very ambiguous Signification. But that Error ſhe ſoon *amended* in (*c*) the next *Publication* of her Book of *Articles*, where ſhe reverſed her former Judgment by leaving the Article without a *Comment:* and it is much to be wiſhed, that the *Governors* of our Church, out of their *epiſcopal* Care for our *Edification*, would make a *Reform* in the *Tranſlation* he *deſcended into Hell*, becauſe it is a Pity, that, in a *Form of ſound Words*, any Expreſſion ſhould ſo widely *deviate* from the Senſe of its *Original.* * *To deſcend* indeed is not a Word ſo very *offenſive*, (*d*) becauſe it is a *popular* Way of ſpeaking, and taken up in *Conformity* to the *general* Opinion of the World, which always ſuppoſed, that the *Receptacles* of departed Souls were under the *Earth*, or in its *Bowels*; but the Word *Hell* cannot bear that *favourable* Conſtruction. Whenever it is pronounced, it denotes the *woeful* Habitation of the Devil, and his Angels; and I am apt to believe, that the repeating it in our *Creed* ſo frequently in this Senſe has put Men upon inventing ſeveral *Purpoſes* of Chriſt's going thither, *viz.* to *preach*, to *ſuffer*, to *conquer*, to *triumph*, to *releaſe* ſome, to *tranſlate* others, or any End whatever, that a pregnant Fancy might deviſe. † The *vulgar*, in this Caſe, muſt neceſſarily fall into Miſapprehenſions; and the *learned* can hardly eſcape the Cenſure of *Equivocation*, when they ſpeak what they no not mean, and *pronounce* a Word, that, to all Intents and Purpoſes, ſignifies the *Place of the Damned*, and yet, by their Skill in the *Greek*, will have the true meaning of it to be the *Place of the Bleſſed.*

And that the Word Hell *ought to be amended in her Creed.*

IN ſhort, no Man, in my Opinion (ſays (*e*) a learned Author) can, with a ſafe Conſcience, rehearſe this *Article*, as it is commonly expreſſed, when he is perſuaded, that *Hell* is not the Word, that is to be uſed; and of this he muſt needs be perſuaded, if he believes that Chriſt *did not go down to Hell.* Though therefore we may not, upon any Account, *expunge* from our Creed this Part of the *Article*, yet it is highly neceſſary to *expreſs it aright*, that People may know

* The Word, which we render *deſcend* (as Archbiſhop *Uſher*, in his Anſwer to a Jeſuit in *Ireland*, aſſures us) is uſed ten Times in the *Acts* of the *Apoſtles*, and yet no where does ſignify to *deſcend* from an *higher* to a *lower* Place, but means ſimply to *remove* from one Place to another. For this Reaſon the vulgar Latin Edition renders it by the general Terms of *abeo*, *venio*, *devenio*, &c. and where it retaineth the Word *deſcendo*, it never intends the lower Situation of the Place, to which the *Removal* is made: and therefore, if deſcending in the *Acts* of the *Apoſtles*, *continues the Prelate*, implies no ſuch Thing, what Neceſſity is there thus to interpret it in the *Creed of the Apoſtles?* Page 390.

† That, which has created Confuſion in the Minds of common Readers, is, that our *Engliſh* Tranſlators have turned two *Greek* Words of two Senſes, ſo remote from each other, by the ſame *Engliſh* Word *Hell*; whereas had they always rendered *Gehennah* by *Hell*, and turned *Hades* by ſome other diſtinct Word, an *Engliſhman* would eaſily and certainly have known the meaning, *Johnſon*'s Ser. Vol. II.

(*a*) Rev. xxii. 11. (*b*) Article III. (*c*) In the Year 1562. (*d*) *King*'s Hiſt of the Creed. (*e*) *Edwards*'s Body Vol. I.

know what we daily profess, and declare in our *publick* Assemblies: For, (*a*) *even in Things without Life* (as the Apostle argues) *whether it be Pipe, or Harp, except they have a Distinction in the Sounds, how shall it be known what is piped, or harped? and if the Trumpet give an uncertain Sound, who shall prepare himself to the Battle? so likewise you, except ye utter, by the Tongue, Words easy to be understood, how shall it be known what is spoken?*

The DISSERTATION.

Of the State of righteous Souls departed.

'Tis the State, *and not the* Place, *that makes the Soul happy.*

THE *Result* of our Enquiries hitherto has been no more, than this ——That our blessed Lord's Soul, after its Departure from his Body, did not go to *Hell*, the Place ordained for the final Punishment of the wicked, but to *Hades*, which, in the *Original*, signifies a different Thing, even the *common* Place of Reception for the Souls of all Men, after their Decease, and that *particular* Mansion, or Apartment in it, which is appointed for the Habitation of the Righteous until the Resurrection Day. The Difference of a *material* Place however (as far as our Apprehensions of these Matters go) can no Ways contribute, either to *increase*, or *diminish* the Happiness, or Misery of an *immaterial* Spirit. (*b*) Spirits, that are divested of Flesh and Blood, wherever they are, carry *Heaven* or *Hell* along with them. The *good Angels* are as happy here upon Earth, whilst they are employed in the Execution of God's Will, as whilst they are conversant in the Regions above, because they do always *behold the Face of God, in whose Presence is Fulness of Joy*; and *Satan* was no more happy, (*c*) when he *came among the Sons of God to present himself before the Lord*, than he was, whilst he was *going to and fro in the Earth, and walking up and down in it.* Since therefore it is not the *Place*, so much as the *State* and Condition of departed Souls, that constitutes their Happiness after Death, it may not be amiss to proceed now to a brief Enquiry into that, and therein to examine the *different* Opinions that are most generally received concerning it, so far as we are authorized by Scripture.

The Opinion of the Soul's Extinction *after Death.*

SOME there are, (*d*) who, though they believe a Resurrection and Life to come, yet will not allow of the *distinct Subsistence* of the Soul after the Death of the Body, and therefore they imagine, that they both die and are extinct together, so that the Resurrection, which we are to undergo, is of the *whole* Man, both Soul and Body, at once; whilst others allow, that the Soul, in its Separation, *subsists* indeed, but then it is in a kind of *Sleep*, or *Lethargy*, a State of utter *Oblivion* and *Insensibility*, without the least *Perception* either of Joy or Sorrow, Happiness or Misery: and for this they produce some Passages in Scripture, but that, which gives the most Umbrage to their Opinion, is the *Metaphor* frequently occurring, by which Death is resembled *to sleep*, and those, that are dead, are said to be *fallen asleep:* but this Form of Speech is * no where, that I know of, applied to the Soul, but to the Body only, resting in the Grave, in order to its being awakened and revived at the Time of the Resurrection.

IT must not be denied however, that the *Constitution* of our Souls, and their Manner of *acting*, even in Conjunction with our Bodies, is a Matter above the

* That this *Metaphor* is frequently used with express Reference to the Body, the following Passages are a manifest Proof. *Many of them, that sleep in the Dust of the Earth shall awake*, Dan. xii. 2. *The Graves were opened, and many Bodies of Saints, which slept, arose*, Matt. xxvii. 52. *David, after he had served his own Generation, by the Will of God fell* on Sleep, *and was laid to his Fathers*, Acts xiii. 36. which surely can no otherwise be understood, than of his Body. *Now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the First-fruits of them that slept*, 1 Cor. xv. 20. *i. e.* the Resurrection of his Body is the *Earnest* and Assurance that ours shall be raised, and therefore he tells us in another Place, *If we believe, that Jesus died, and rose again, even so them also, that* sleep *in Jesus, shall God bring with him*, 1 Thess. iv. 14. whereby he can mean nothing else, but that the Bodies of those, who died in the Lord, shall be raised, and accompany him at his coming. So that it is the *Body*, which is said in Scripture to *sleep*, and not the *Soul*, *Tillotson*'s Ser. Vol. I.

(*a*) 1 Cor. xiv. 7, &c. (*b*) *Smalridge*'s Ser. (*c*) Job i. 6, 7. (*d*) *Bull*'s Ser. Vol. I.

largeſt human Comprehenſion. Our Enquiries of this Kind (according to the Senſe of the great (*a*) Lord *Verulam*) muſt be determined by Scripture only, otherwiſe they lie liable to many Errors, and Illuſions of Senſe. " For, ſince the Subſtance of the " Soul, in its Creation, was not deduced " from the *Maſs* of Heaven and Earth, but " immediately *inſpired* from God; and " ſince the *Laws* of Heaven and Earth are " the proper *Subjects* of *Philoſophy*, the " Knowledge of the *Subſtance* of the rea- " ſonable Soul can never be derived from " thence, but muſt neceſſarily be drawn " from the ſame *Inſpiration*, that gave it " Being at firſt;" and therefore if we conſult the divinely inſpired Writers upon this Subject, we may obſerve,—that our bleſſed Lord, ſending his Apoſtles abroad to notify his *Advent*, as the great and promiſed *Meſſias*, takes Occaſion from thence to foretel what Perſecutions they were to expect in the future Diſcharge of their Miniſtry, but, at the ſame Time, he gives them this Encouragement, (*b*) *Fear not them, who kill the Body, but are not able to kill the Soul*, whereby he plainly ſignifies, that the Soul was a diſtinct Subſtance from the Body, had a *ſeparate* Exiſtence, and was out of the Reach of any created Power to deſtroy; whereas, if the Soul had ſuch a neceſſary *Dependance* on the Body, that, when the Body dies, itſelf, in Courſe, muſt die with it, then he, that kills the Body, muſt, with the ſame *Stroke*, murther the Soul too; but this our Saviour confutes by his own *Example*, when, being at the Point of Death, he addreſſes his heavenly Father in this Manner, *Father, (c) into thy Hands I commend my Spirit*; by which it appears, that he himſelf believed, that he had a Spirit, a rational and ſuperior Soul, which, after the Death of his Body, and the Extinction of his *Animal* Part, ſtill remained, and this he recommends to the gracious and ſafe Cuſtody of his Father.

THE ſame Doctrine our Saviour eſtabliſhes in his Anſwer to the *Sadducees*, where he introduces God thus declaring himſelf; (*d*) *I am the God of* Abraham, *and the God of* Iſaac, *and the God of* Jacob, and then ſubjoins, *God is not the God of the dead, but of the living*; whereby he means, that, ſince for *God to be one's God* does neceſſarily imply a preſent *Relation*, that God has to *him*; and ſince no Relation can *continue*, when either of the *Relatives* ceaſes, or is taken away; from hence it muſt follow, that *Abraham*, *Iſaac*, and *Jacob* were then *alive*, and did ſubſiſt (*viz.* in their Spirits) when (*e*) God ſpake theſe Words to *Moſes*, i. e. many Years after the Death of their Bodies: And for the ſame Reaſon we find the divine Author of the Epiſtle to the *Hebrews* informing us, that we Chriſtians are joined, not only to an *innumerable Company of Angels*, but alſo to the (*f*) *Society of the Spirits of juſt Men made perfect*, who had *finiſhed their Courſe*, and were waiting, in their ſeparate State, for (*g*) *the Adoption, to wit, the Redemption of their Body*.

And Inſenſibility, *refuted.*

HOW the Soul, in its State of *Separation*, when deſtitute of thoſe *corporeal Images*, which the Occurrence of outward *Objects* is wont to impreſs upon it, is able to *perceive* and *operate*; and, whether it has any new *ſubtiller Organs*, that God may then adapt to it, or, being diveſted of the Body, may have it in its own Power, to act with more *Vigour* and Vivacity, than it could before, (*h*) *we cannot tell, God only knows*. This is a Condition we have never yet *experienced*: But the Thing it ſelf, *viz.* that the Soul, in this State of *Diſunion*, has a *Perception* of Things, and, by that Perception, is either *happy* or *miſerable*, this is apparent from *divine Revelation*. Some learned *Interpreters* have obſerved, that our Saviour, in his Reply to the *penitent Thief*, promiſed him more than he aſked. (*i*) *Lord, remember me, when thou comeſt into thy Kingdom*, was all that he requeſted; but *To day ſhalt thou be with me in Paradiſe* was our Lord's moſt gracious Anſwer. But now we all agree, that *Paradiſe* is a Place of Pleaſure and Delight, and therefore to what Purpoſe ſhould our Lord promiſe this poor Penitent, that, on the very Day, he died, he ſhould become an Inhabitant in it, if the *common Gulph* of Oblivion and Inſenſibility were to ſwallow up all his *Faculties* before he arrived there, and to render him altogether *incapable* of taſting its Joys and Felicities? St. *Paul*, when (*k*) *caught up into Paradiſe*, ſaw *Viſions*, and *Revelations*, and *heard Words impoſſible to be uttered*, as he tells us; and thereby informs us, that it

(*a*) Advancement of Learning, L. 4. C. 3. (*b*) Matt. x. 28. (*c*) Luke xxiii. 46. (*d*) Matt. xxii. 31, 32. (*e*) Exod. iii. 6. (*f*) Heb. xii. 23. (*g*) Rom. xviii. 23. (*h*) 1 Cor. xii. 2. (*i*) Luke xxiii. 42, 43. (*k*) 2 Cor. xii. 3, 4.

it is ſo far from being a Place of Darkneſs and Obſcurity, Silence and Oblivion, where all its Inhabitants are in a profound Sleep, that, on the contrary, it is a glorious Place, full of *Light* and raviſhing *Viſion*, and where *Myſteries* may be heard and learned, far ſurpaſſing any mortal Apprehenſion. No Wonder then, if, having an experimental Knowledge of this, he ſhould expreſs himſelf to the *Philippians* in theſe Words; (*a*) *I am in a Strait between two, having a Deſire to depart, and to be with Chriſt, which is far better.* But now, had his Soul, when it left his Body, immediately ſunk into Slumber and Forgetfulneſs, and ſo continued until the Reſurrection, there needed no *Demur*, or Heſitation in the Caſe, ſince every one muſt allow, that it is a much more deſirable Thing, to enjoy the Uſe of our *intellectual* Faculties, than to be deprived of them; to ſpend our Time, as St. *Paul* did, in the Comforts of Well-doing, in *planting*, and *watering*, and *confirming* the Churches of Chriſt, than to drop into a *Lethargy*, and ſo live, *unactive*, and *inſenſate*, as long as this World endures. With ſuch a Thought as this in his Mind, how could the Apoſtle, with any good Grace or Veracity, ſay, (*b*) *to me to die is Gain*; ſince to be employed in the Service of Chriſt, the Propagation of his Goſpel, and the Promotion of the Happineſs and Salvation of Chriſtians (which he calls (*c*) *his Hope, his Joy, his Crown of rejoicing*) could not but be a State infinitely preferable, to a long continued Stupor, and Inſenſibility? But to proceed.

The Soul in a State of Suffering.

2. OTHERS imagine, that the Soul, at its Separation from the Body, is ſo far from dropping into a profound Sleep, that it is immediately conſigned to a State of *Suffering*, in order to make Satisfaction for ſome ſuch Faults and Frailties, as were not repented of in *this* Life; and yet of too *trivial* a Nature to deſerve the *Severity*, that will be exerciſed in the other. "For, if every Sin merits Puniſhment "(as they argue) and no Soul, defiled "therewith, can enter into the Preſence "of God; if (*d*) *for every idle Word we "are to give an Account*, and yet Offences "of this Kind are daily and hourly in-"curred, even by the beſt of God's Ser-"vants, a Time there muſt be, for the "Expiation of theſe, and that can be no "other, than the *Interval* between our "Death and our Reſurrection." But this is a Doctrine that has no *Foundation* in Scripture. For, if, *under the Law*, God is declared to be (*e*) *merciful and gracious, long-ſuffering and abundant in Goodneſs, keeping Mercy for Thouſands, forgiving Iniquity, Tranſgreſſion, and Sin*; if, upon our Repentance and Amendment, (*f*) *tho' our Sins be as Scarlet, they ſhall be as white as Snow, though they be red as Crimſon, they ſhall be like Wool*, through the Forgiveneſs of him, (*g*) *whoſe tender Mercies are over all his Works*: If, *under the Goſpel*, God (*h*) *was in Chriſt reconciling the World to himſelf*, and *not imputing their Treſpaſſes to them*, becauſe *he made him to be Sin, who knew no Sin, that* they *might be made the Righteouſneſs of God in him*; if our bleſſed Saviour came into the World, by the Sacrifice of himſelf, to make a full *Propitiation* for the Sins of Mankind, even for the moſt heinous and deteſtable Sins, that can be committed; and, accordingly, (*i*) *by one Offering hath perfected for ever them that are ſanctified*, ſo that (*k*) *in him we have Redemption, through his Blood, the Forgiveneſs of our Sins, according to the Riches of his Grace*; if, in Virtue of this Redemption, the *Apoſtle* had good Reaſon to make this Challenge, (*l*) *Who then ſhall lay any Thing to the Charge of God's Elect? It is God that juſtifieth; who is he that condemneth? It is Chriſt that died; yea, rather that is riſen again, who is even at the right Hand of God, who alſo maketh Interceſſion for us*: If, in *both Teſtaments*, I ſay, the Mercies of God, through the Merits and Mediation of Chriſt, extend, even in this Life, to the Forgiveneſs of the moſt enormous Offences, we cannot ſee, why the leſſer *Slips* and *Tranſgreſſions*, conſequent upon the Corruption of our Nature, ſhould, after Death, draw upon us any *penal* Exactions, unleſs we could ſuppoſe, that our heavenly Father ſhould, with the *King* in the *Parable*, be ſo *generous*, as to (*m*) *forgive us ten thouſand Talents*, and yet, at the ſame Time, ſo unaccountably *cruel*, as, with the *wicked Servant*, to *take us by the Throat, and deliver us to the Tormentors* for a poor *hundred Pence*, that was forgotten in the Account.

MANY

(*a*) Phil. i. 23. (*b*) Ver. 21. (*c*) 1 Theſ. ii. 19. (*d*) Matt. xii. 36. (*e*) Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7. (*f*) Iſai. i. 18. (*g*) Pſal. cxlv. 9. (*h*) 2 Cor. v. 19. 21. (*i*) Heb. x. 14. (*k*) Eph. i. 7. (*l*) Rom. viii. 33, 34. (*m*) Matt. xviii. 24, &c.

The Nature of leſſer Sins, and how they are forgiven.

MANY indeed are the leſſer Offences, which through invincible Ignorance, or unavoidable Infirmity, the moſt cautious and circumſpect Walkers with God can hardly avoid committing daily; but then we are to remember, that theſe fall under the general *Covenant* of Grace, and are in themſelves pardonable, upon the Account of the *grand Expiation*, which hinders the divine Juſtice from being *extreme to mark what is done amiſs*. Though therefore they ſhould not be able, with their utmoſt Diligence, to avoid theſe *leſſer* Sins; though they ſhould daily fall into them; though they ſhould at laſt die in them; yet God in Mercy will not deem them unworthy (without any previous *Purgation*) to be admitted into Heaven, and to be Partakers of endleſs Bliſs and Glory. (*a*) Such Sins as theſe conſiſt with a good *Conſcience*, with the Duty of *Sincerity*, and ſuch a Meaſure of Holineſs, as God requires of us in this Life, as a neceſſary Condition of our ſeeing and enjoying him, and our being happy in that *beatifick* Viſion in the Life to come: Such Sins as theſe, being not the *wilful* Objects of our Choice, but the *unavoidable* Defects of our Nature; being ſuch, as, before we commit them, we endeavour to *eſcape*, but cannot, with all our Endeavours, always eſcape; and ſuch, as when we have committed them, we do earneſtly repent of, but, after our earneſt Repentance, do ſtill *involuntarily* relapſe into them again; being thus circumſtantiated, I ſay, they are not ſo heinous and provoking, as to make a *Breach* between us and our God. *Blemiſhes* they are indeed, but ſuch Blemiſhes, as the brighteſt Saints were not without, when they were cloathed with Fleſh and Blood; and therefore, when we read, that *there ſhall in no wiſe enter into the heavenly* Jeruſalem *any thing, that defileth*, we muſt either think, that the Kingdom of Heaven will be always *deſolate* and *unpeopled*, or that ſuch Slips and Imperfections, as we are now treating of, are not to be numbered among thoſe *Defilements*, which will unqualify Chriſtians to *abide in God's Tabernacle*, or to *dwell in his holy Hill*.

THE Forgiveneſs of leſſer Faults, as a Condition of the Covenant of Grace, without any *ſatisfactory* Sufferings after Death, to qualify us for our *final* Reception into Heaven, was certainly the Faith and Perſuaſion of the *Saints*, otherwiſe we cannot imagine, why they ſhould be ſo deſirous to be *abſent from the Body*, or diſſolved, if, after that Diſſolution, their *better Part* was to enter into a State of *Puniſhment*, for how long, or for what End, they could not well tell; nor does it ſtand to Reaſon, that while they were in (*b*) *the Tabernacle of the Fleſh*, they ſhould ſo vehemently *groan*, and be ſo impatient to be eaſed of their *Burden*; if ſo be, they had entertained the leaſt Notion of this——that, as ſoon as ever they were *found naked*, they ſhould be confined to a *Tabernacle* much more uneaſy, than what they had left.

THE Prophet *Iſaiah* had not the leaſt Conception of this, when, ſpeaking of the Death of the *righteous*, he expreſſes himſelf in theſe Words: (*c*) *He ſhall enter into Peace, they ſhall reſt in their Beds, each one walking in his Uprightneſs*. *He ſhall reſt in Peace*, i. e. (*d*) the juſt and righteous Man ſhall, when he dies, be admitted to a State of *Reſt* and *Quiet*, where he ſhall be no longer diſturbed with thoſe Evils, to which, during his *Pilgrimage* in this Life, he was expoſed: And then (*varying* the Number to denote the Condition of God's *Saints* in general) *they ſhall reſt in their Beds*, ſays he, *i. e.* their Bodies ſhall be ſafely repoſited in their *Graves*, where they ſhall ſleep quietly, till they are awakened by the laſt *Trump*, and their Souls ſhall be unmoleſted, and at Eaſe in thoſe *Receptacles* which God hath prepared for the Abode of the Spirits of thoſe that have approved themſelves in his Service. *Each one walking in his own Righteouſneſs*, i. e. each one reaping the Fruit of his paſt *Integrity*, looking back upon a well-ſpent Life with Comfort and Peace of Conſcience, and, with Joy and Pleaſure, contemplating that great and glorious Reward, which God has provided for all thoſe, that live and die in his Favour. So *ſimilar* are the Words of the *Prophet* with the *Voice*, which *came from Heaven*, (*e*) *Bleſſed are the dead, which die in the Lord, for they reſt from their Labours, and their Works do follow them*: Neither of which however could be true, if, inſtead of *entering into Peace*, or *reſting from their Labours*, they were obliged to be exerciſed, after Death, in a new *Courſe* of Anguiſh and Suffering, in order to make *Satisfaction*

(*a*) *Smalridge's* Serm. (*b*) 2 Cor. v. 3, 4. (*c*) Iſai. lvii. 2. (*d*) *Smalridge's* Serm.
(*e*) Rev. xiv. 13.

faction for ſome ſlight Offences, that, in this Life, had eſcaped them, before they can arrive at Happineſs.

BUT alas! what *Satisfaction*, what Compenſation for the leaſt Tranſgreſſions, can any mortal Man make to almighty God in *this* Life, and much leſs in the *next?* There is no altering our Condition after Death. The *Suffrages* and Aſſiſtance of all Men living cannot do it. (*a*) *In the Place where the Tree falleth, there ſhall it be*; and therefore the Advice of the *Royal Preacher*, in this Caſe, is to be preferred before all other vain Expedients, (*b*) *Whatever thy Hand findeth to do, do it with thy Might: For there is no Work, nor Device, nor Knowledge, nor Wiſdom*, to rectify any Miſtakes committed here, *in the Grave, whither thou goeſt.*

Or of perfect Happineſs *after Death not agreeable to Scripture.*

3. OTHERS have imagined, (*c*) that the Souls of all good Men, after their Departure out of the Body, are immediately, by holy *Angels*, conveyed into the *higheſt* Heavens; are there admitted into the glorious *Preſence* of God and of his Son Jeſus Chriſt; and do there enjoy the ſame Happineſs and Glory, (the *ſame* not only in *Subſtance*, but in *Degree* likewiſe) which they ſhall enjoy after the Reſurrection of the Body, barely with this one Difference, that their Bodies are not, as yet, Partakers of this Glory, becauſe, as yet, they are not raiſed from the dead, and reunited to their Souls. But this Opinion (though generally received) I cannot ſay, is ſo conſonant to the Tenor of the Goſpel, becauſe it ſeems, in ſome Meaſure, to vacate the *Neceſſity* of a future Judgment.

THAT ſome departed Souls are in a State of Happineſs, ſome in a State of Miſery; that, according to their different Demeanor in this mortal Life, their Condition is different, upon their *Tranſlation* into another World; and that, in the *Interval* between their Separation and Reunion, they do not ſleep a profound Sleep, void of all Action and Perception, and inſenſible either of Pleaſure or Pain, this we allow, and this we have proved already: But that theſe different States are *allotted* them by any *formal Sentence* paſſed upon them immediately after their Death; that their Actions are *then* weighed and examined by the Judge of Heaven and Earth, and Judgment pronounced upon them *ſeverally*, according to what they have done; and, in ſhort, that the Souls of the righteous ſhall, at the Day of Judgment, be admitted into a Participation of no *other*, or no *greater* Bliſs, than what they now enjoy; this, we think, we have good Grounds, from the plain Declarations of Scripture, to deny. For, in the Proceſs of the great *Day of the Lord*, why is it ſaid, that (*d*) *all the dead, both ſmall and great, ſhall ſtand together before God*; that the *Books ſhall be opened*, and the *dead judged out of thoſe Things, which are written in the Books, according to their Works*, if, long before this, they had ſeverally ſtood before God; if Judgment had paſſed upon them, that Judgment had been awarded, and they recompenſed according to their Works?

IN the Deſcription, which our Saviour gives of the *final* Day of Retribution, the righteous are repreſented, as *ſurprized*, that the Judge ſhould reward them for Actions, which they were not conſcious ever to have done. They could not conceive, how (*e*) *they had fed* him, whom they never ſaw *hungry*, or *cloathed him*, whom they never knew to be *naked*. They ſeem to be *unacquainted* with his wonderful Love and Goodneſs, in accounting what was (*f*) *done unto the leaſt of his Brethren, as done unto himſelf*; but this they could not have been ignorant of, had their Behaviour been enquired into before, and they, accordingly, for the very Acts of *Charity*, here commemorated, had received a full *Recompence of Reward.*

THAT the full and final Recompence of the righteous will not be, before the general Judgment, our Lord has inſtructed us in the (*g*) *Parable of the Talents*, where the *Nobleman* does not call his Servants to an Account, nor reward them according to the different Improvements, they had made of his Money, until his *Return* from that *Country*, whither he was *gone to receive for himſelf a Kingdom*; and, in that of the (*h*) *Tares and Wheat mixed together*, as the Time of making a *Diſcrimination* between them, is not until the *Harveſt*; that, by the *Harveſt* we are to underſtand the *End of the World* we have our Lord's Interpretation for it; and, withal,

(*a*) Eccl. xi. 3. (*b*) ix. 10. (*c*) *Smalridge*'s Serm. (*d*) Rev. xx. 12. (*e*) Matt. xxv. 35, 36. (*f*) Ver. 40. (*g*) Luke xix. 12. (*h*) Matt. xiii. 37, &c.

withal, this farther Declaration, that (*a*) *then* (but not till then) *ſhall the righteous ſhine forth, as the Sun, in the Kingdom of their Father:* For this Reaſon St. *Paul* tells us, that when he had (*b*) *finiſhed his Courſe*, the *Crown of Righteouſneſs* was not immediately to be ſet upon his Head, but, from that Time, to be *laid up for him*, and *given him* at that *emphatical Day*, when *the Lord, the righteous Judge*, ſhould come to *reward all thoſe, that love his Appearing*; and therefore the *Saints* of God are directed to (*c*) *look for that bleſſed Hope*, or that *Bleſſedneſs*, which they are taught to hope for, and which will accompany the *glorious Appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt.* But now, if, after the Appearance of Chriſt, there ſhall be no other *Acceſſion* to the Happineſs of departed Saints, but what ariſes from the *Glorification* of their Bodies; if, even after his Appearance, their Souls are already poſſeſſed of all that Happineſs, they are capable of, and to which, through the Merits of Chriſt, they are entitled, there can be no ſufficient Reaſon given, why they ſhould be ſaid to expect the *Appearance of Chriſt*, in order to be made Partakers of the *Bleſſedneſs they hoped*; for, if that Bleſſedneſs was already complete in all Reſpects, except the Reſurrection of their Bodies, as it did not at all *depend* upon the Body, it might ſo continue to all Eternity, even though there were no ſuch Thing, as a Reſurrection.

But in a State of imperfect Happineſs, *is entirely ſo.*

4. I mention but one Opinion more, which varies, in ſome Meaſure, from this, but ſeems more conſonant to the Word of God, and that is,——that the Happineſs of departed Souls, in the *Degree* of it, is leſs perfect *before*, than it ſhall be *after* the Reſurrection: (*d*) That, *before the Reſurrection*, they are not only freed from all the Cares and Troubles, all the Griefs and Anxieties, all the Pains and Anguiſh, to which they were expoſed in this mortal Life, and placed in a State of perfect Eaſe and Tranquillity of Mind; but being delivered likewiſe from the Pollution and Danger of Sin, have the Virtues, they contracted here, very much improved, and their Happineſs *proportionably* augmented, by the nearer and more diſtinct Proſpect, they have of the Glory, which is reſerved for them at the laſt Day: But that, *after the Reſurrection*, there ſhall be a vaſt Acceſſion to their Happineſs, not only by their being then *glorified* in Body, as well as Spirit, but alſo by an *Increaſe* of that Bliſs, which before they enjoyed in a *leſs* Proportion; that they ſhall then be admitted into a clearer and nearer View of God, a fuller Enjoyment of, and a more intimate Union with him, who is the Source and Fountain of all true Felicity and Delight.

The Royal Pſalmiſt has compriſed this whole Doctrine in a very few Words. (*e*) *As for me*, ſays he, *I will behold thy Face in Righteouſneſs*; here is the *Qualification* requiſite to a bleſſed Futurity, by the Practice of every Virtue endeavouring to be acquainted with God; *and, when I awake*; here is the *intermediate* State of Reſt and Tranquillity, compared to a *pleaſant Sleep*, between our Death and our Reſurrection: *I ſhall be ſatisfied with thy Likeneſs*; here is the complete Happineſs in the *beatifick* Viſion, when (*f*) *with open Face* (as the *Apoſtle* words it) *beholding, as in a Glaſs, thy Glory, I ſhall be changed into the ſame Image, from Glory to Glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.* For, (*g*) *now we are the Sons of God* (ſays the beloved St. *John*) *and it does not yet appear what we ſhall be; but we know, that when he ſhall appear, we ſhall be like him, for we ſhall ſee him as he is*; as if he had ſaid, (*h*) We have no *diſtinct* Conception of that Happineſs, which we ſhall at laſt enjoy: when we feel it, when we actually enjoy it, then ſhall we be able to comprehend it; but we ſhall not feel it, we ſhall not actually enjoy it in its utmoſt Perfection, *till he appears*, i. e. till we ſee God our Saviour as he is; and yet we ſhall not *thus* ſee him, till he comes to judge the World; we ſhall not, till then, be actually poſſeſſed of all that *Beatitude*, which conſiſts in the *Viſion* of God and of Chriſt.

This Opinion concerning the different State of departed Souls *before*, and *after* the Reſurrection, I ſhould rather approve, becauſe it is moſt *congruous* to the Word of God (as might be evinced by Abundance of other Paſſages) moſt *agreeable* to the Sentiments of thoſe *Fathers*, who lived in the firſt and pureſt Ages of the Church, and moſt conſiſtent with the Doctrine of our own, which declares, (*i*) *that the Souls of*

(*a*) Matt. xiii. 43. (*b*) 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8. (*c*) Tit. ii. 13. (*d*) *Smalridge*'s Serm. (*e*) Pſal. xvii. 15. (*f*) 2 Cor. iii. 18. (*g*) 1 John iii. 2. (*h*) *Smalridge*'s Serm. (*i*) *Vid.* the Office for the Burial of the dead.

of the faithful, after they are delivered from the Burden of the Fleſh, are in Joy and Felicity; and yet that this Joy and Felicity are not ſo full, and complete, but that there is ſtill Room for us to pray to God, *that he would accompliſh the Number of his Elect, and haſten his Kingdom, that all thoſe, who are departed in the true Faith of his holy Name, may have their perfect Conſummation and Bliſs, both in Body and Soul, in his eternal and everlaſting Glory, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. Amen.*

The Recapitulation *and* Uſe *of the whole.*

THIS may ſuffice for our better underſtanding the *fourth Article* of the Creed, *he ſuffered under* Pontius Pilate, *was crucified, dead, buried, and deſcended into Hell*; wherein we profeſs moſt ſtedfaſtly to believe,—" that our *Lord Jeſus*, who was " the Son of God, having aſſumed human Nature, that he might be in a Capacity to *die* for us, and ſo fulfil the " Scripture *Prophecies* concerning the promiſed *Meſſias*, did, in that Nature (for " his *Divinity* was *impaſſible)* undergo " many grievous and bitter Things; but, " more eſpecially, in the Courſe of his " *Miniſtry* (which was in the Time, when " *Pontius Pilate*, under the Emperor *Tiberius*, was *Procurator* of *Judæa)* was " reviled and perſecuted by the *Jews* " with ſuch a Spirit of Malice and Revenge, that neither the *Innocence* of his " Life, nor the *Goodneſs* of his Doctrine, " nor the *Greatneſs* of his Miracles could " allay their *Fury*, or procure him better " Treatment: That not only the opprobrious Names of Rebel, falſe Prophet, " and Mover of Sedition, of Blaſphemer " of God, and familiar with the Devil, " were continually thrown in his Teeth, " but, under Pretence of ſome of theſe " Crimes, he was apprehended, arraigned, condemned, and, by this very *Pilate*, who pronounced him *guiltleſs*, " ſentenced to a cruel, painful, and ignominious Death: That, after his Condemnation, he was barbarouſly uſed by " the *Roman* Soldiers, buffetted, ſcourged, " ſpit upon, ridiculed, and, at length, " carried out, *bearing his own Croſs*, to " the Place of Execution, where they " nailed his Hands and his Feet to the " *accurſed Tree*, and ſo expoſed him " naked to the Flouts and Revilings of " the rude Rabble: That, in this Condition, he continued for the Space of *ſix* " *Hours*, under exquiſite Torture of Body, and Diſconſolation of Mind, under " the Load of our Guilt, and the Diſpleaſure of almighty God, till *Nature* being " worn out, as it were, with the Violence " of Pain and Grief, and his Spirits in a " Manner exhauſted, he *voluntarily* reſigned up his Life in *Ranſom* for ours, " and *commended* his Soul to his heavenly " *Father*; and that, after this Separation " of his Soul and Body, his Body, by the " kind *Offices* of his Friends, was *repoſited* " in the *Grave*, and his Soul, by the *Conduct* of good Angels, was *tranſlated* into " *Paradiſe*, the happy *Receptacle* of thoſe, " that die in the Lord: And the proper " Influence of all this is—To aſſure us of " the *Truth* of Chriſt's human Nature, " without which he could not have been " the *Redeemer* of Man, and of the full " Atonement and Propitiation for Sin, " which he could not have made, unleſs " he had ſuffered; to teach us the deepeſt " *Humility*, from the infinite Debaſement " of divine Majeſty upon our Account; a " generous *Contempt* of the World, from " the Example of him, who choſe the *Adverſities*, rather than the *Pomps* and Splendors of it; a due *Valuation* of ourſelves, " whoſe Ranſom and Recovery coſt a *Price* " ſo ineſtimable, (*a*) as *the precious Blood* " *of Chriſt*; to *glory* and triumph in the " Croſs of Chriſt, as that, whereon our " *Redemption* was tranſacted and the divine *Love* diſplayed, and therefore chearfully to *take it up*, in any Form of Suffering, whenever it lies in the Way of " our Duty: To ſtrengthen the Senſe " and Expectation of our *Mortality*, which " even the Son of God, when cloathed in " our Nature, could not *eſcape*; to encourage us againſt the ſlaviſh *Fear of Death*, " which he, *by taking Part of the ſame*, " has *ſweetened* and *unſtinged*; and to remind us of the Nature of our Chriſtian " *Profeſſion*, which is not a State of *Eaſe* " and *Security*, but of *Danger* and ſore " *Tribulation*, conforming us to the (*b*) " *Captain of our Salvation, who was made* " *perfect by Sufferings.*"

(*a*) 1 Pet. i. 19.

(*b*) Heb. ii. 10.

CHAP.

CHAP. V. SECT. I.

ARTICLE V.

The third Day * he rose again from the Dead.

The EXPOSITION.

IT (*a*) is the Observation of some *Divines*, that the *three Parts* of our Saviour's *Humiliation*, in the last and grand *Scene* of it, do very appositely answer to the *three Parts* of his *Exaltation*; his *Death*, to his *rising* again; his *Burial*, to his *ascending* into Heaven; and his *Descent into Hell*, to his *sitting* on the right Hand of God, in a State of everlasting Glory and Felicity. According to the Account in our *Creed*, we have seen the utter *Dissolution* of his *human* Nature; that his Soul and Body were quite *separated*; the one laid in the silent *Grave*, and the other placed in the happy *Mansions* of Rest for a certain Space of Time: but now, by the divine Order and Appointment, these *constituent* Parts of him must be united again: his Soul must leave the Place, where it has been lodged, and visit the *Sepulchre*, where his Body lies, incorrupt, and undecayed, and (*b*) preserved, all the while, in its complete *Organization*, for the Soul, at its coming, to *re-enter*, and animate afresh, and so † give *new* Motion and Vigour to those *vital* Faculties, which the cold Hand of Death had *congealed*. For the proper Notion of a Resurrection is a real and substantial *Change* (and not an accidental *Alteration*,) whereby that Body, which once existed, but by Death was parted from the Soul, by the *Reaccession* of its Soul, is revived, and quickened again, and so becomes the very same Thing, that it was before. "For "the (*c*) reasonable Soul, we must re- "member, when separate from the Bo- "dy, is still in a State of *Existence*, "and, consequently, in a Capacity of "being reunited to the Body. When "therefore these two *essential* Parts are so "conjoined together again, by a proper "and *vital* Union, that from thence "Life, and the several Functions of it "do necessarily flow; then does the same "Man *live*, who died before, and, con- "sequently, this *Reunion* of the same "Soul and Body is a *proper* Resurrecti- "on from Death to Life, because the "same *individual* Person, consisting of "the same Soul and Body, which was "dead, is now alive again."

The proper *Notion of a Resurrection.*

THAT the promised *Messias*, whenever he came into the World, after a cruel Death, was, in a short Time, to be raised to Life again by the almighty Power of God, this, by several *Events*, mentioned in sacred History, was *prefigured*,

That the Messias *was to rise again both* typified *and* foretold.

* Whatever *Variations* have appeared in any of the other Articles, this Part of Christ's Resurrection hath been constantly delivered without the least Alteration, either by Way of *Addition* or *Diminution*. The whole Matter of it is so necessary, and essential to the Christian Faith, that nothing of it could be omitted, and, in these few Expressions, the whole Doctrine is so clearly delivered, that nothing needed to be added. Some Confessions indeed leave out the last Words *from the Dead*, and, even in *Ruffinus*, some Copies have them not; but generally, in all the rest, which are the most *ancient*, they are expressed; and therefore the Omission is to be imputed to the Negligence of the *Author*, or *Transcriber*, rather than to the Usage of the Church, in their Age. *Pearson* on the Creed.

† How our Saviour's new Body was *replenished* with *Blood*, since it had lost the greatest Part of it on the Cross; whether by the Power of God it was brought back again into his Veins, and miraculously supplied; or whether his Body, that was then of the Nature of a *celestial* Body, needed the Supplies of Blood, to furnish new Spirits, for serving the vital Functions, since his eating and drinking was so seldom, that it seemed rather to be done in order to satisfy his Apostles, than to answer the Necessities of Nature; these are *Curiosities*, that signify so little, if we could certainly resolve them, that it is to no Purpose to enquire about them, since we cannot know what to determine in them. *Burnet* on the Articles.

(*a*) *South* Ser. Vol. III. (*b*) *Burnet* on the Art. (*c*) *Pearson* on the Creed.

preſigured, and, by ſeveral *Paſſages*, recorded in the Writings of the Prophets, was *foretold*. The Author to the *Hebrews* ſeems to intimate that *Iſaac*'s Danger and Deliverance were primarily deſigned for a Repreſentation of this, when he tells us that (*a*) *by Faith* Abraham, *when he was tried, * offered up* Iſaac——*accounting that God was able to raiſe him up, even from the dead, from whence alſo he received him in a Figure.* Several learned Men have obſerved, that *Joſeph*'s being taken out of the *Pit* and *Dungeon*, and, not long after, promoted by *Pharaoh* to the higheſt Place of Dignity and Authority in his Kingdom, was no bad *Emblem* of Chriſt's Releaſe from the Grave, and Advancement to the (*b*) *right Hand of God, far above all Principality, and Power:* But, of all others, *Jonas* is the moſt ſignificant *Type* of the Reſurrection of the *Meſſias*, and therefore made uſe of by our bleſſed Saviour to *prefigure* and illuſtrate his own. For, as that Prophet *was three Days and three Nights in the Whale's Belly*, but, after that, by the divine Command (*c*) *was vomited out on the dry Land*; ſo long was the *Meſſias* to be confined (*d*) *in the Heart of the Earth*, but, after the Expiration of that Time, he was to be releaſed, and ſet free from the Bands of Death: for thus ſaith the Prophet, (*e*) *let us return unto the Lord, for he hath ſpoiled us, and he will heal us, he hath wounded us, and he will bind us up: † after two Days he will revive us, and the third Day will he raiſe us up, and we ſhall live in his Sight:* and thus the Royal *Pſalmiſt*, *my (f) Fleſh ſhall reſt in Hope, becauſe thou wilt not leave my Soul in Hell*, i. e. in the State of the Dead, *nor ſuffer thy holy One to ſee Corruption*; which Words (as the (*g*) two *Apoſtles* excellently argue) can by no Means relate to the *Patriarch David*, and muſt therefore be underſtood of ſome other eminent Perſon, and that Perſon, according to the *Analogy* of the *prophetick* Writings, can be no other, than the *Meſſias*.

And ſo was our Saviour according to his own Predictions.

And as the holy Scriptures, both by *Types* and *Propheſies*, have ſupplied us with ſuch Premonitions as theſe concerning the *Meſſias*, ſo our bleſſed Saviour, to ſhew that he was the Perſon chiefly intended by them, through the whole Courſe of his *Miniſtry*, never failed to give his Diſciples the like *Notifications* of his Reſurrection, inſomuch that whenever he mentions the *Sufferings*, he was finally to *accompliſh*, he always remembers to cloſe that *melancholy* Subject with the comfortable Promiſe of returning to Life again. (*h*) *We go up to Jeruſalem*, ſays he, *and the Son of Man ſhall be betrayed to the chief Prieſts and Scribes, and they ſhall condemn him, and put him to Death*, but, let not your Hearts be troubled, *on the third Day he ſhall riſe again.* This is the Promiſe, that he made unto them, a little before his Paſſion; and that he has verified it to the full, a ſmall Inſpection into the Goſpel-Hiſtory will be enough to convince us.

The Evidence of it before.

We have ſeen our bleſſed Lord taken down dead from the Croſs, wrapt in a *fine linen Cloth*, embalmed with *Spices*, laid in a *new Sepulchre*, that Sepulchre hewn out of a Rock, cloſed with a great *Stone, ſealed* with the Governor's *Signet*, guarded with a ſtrong *Watch*, and that Watch cautioned to take care (*i*) *that his Diſciples came not by Night, and ſtole him away.* Hitherto we ſee that all Things were ſafe and ſecure; but when the Time of his Reſurrection drew (*k*) *near, early*

* This is the Language of the *new Teſtament* both here, and in *James* ii. 21. and in this Manner the *Jews* conſtantly expreſs themſelves, for which Reaſon *Philo* informs us, that, though the Fact was not performed, *yet it was preſerved in the Minds of the Readers, and mentioned in the ſacred Volumes, as a Thing entire and abſolutely done:* and from hence they frame this Story——*that, when the Knife touched* Iſaac's *Throat, his Soul departed, and, that, when God ſaid, lay* not thy Hand upon the Lad, *it returned, and ſo he, being dead, revived.* And truly *Abraham*, having done all, that belonged to him to do, towards this offering of his Son, and being fully reſolved to have gone through the Work, had not God's Call reſtrained him, may well be ſaid, in the divine Conſtruction, to have actually done it. *Whitby* in Locum.

† This is a *Text* ſo plain and evident to the preſent Purpoſe (though poſſibly intended by the Prophet of ſome ſpeedy Deliverance, which, by his Mouth, God was pleaſed to promiſe the Houſe of *Judah*) that, as it clearly foretels a Reſurrection, ſo the Accompliſhment of it in the Man Chriſt Jeſus might ſerve abundantly to convince the moſt ſtubborn *Jew*, that it was *principally* meant and foretold of him. *Heylyn* on the Creed.

(*a*) Heb. xi. 17, 18. (*b*) Eph. i. 21. (*c*) Jonas ii. 10. (*d*) Matt. xii. 40. (*e*) Hoſea vi. 1, 2. (*f*) Pſal. xvi. 9, 10. (*g*) Acts ii. 13. and xiii. 35. (*h*) Matt. xx. 18, 19. (*i*) Matt. xxvii. 60, 64. (*k*) Matt. xxviii. 1.

in the Morning, as it began to dawn, towards the first Day of the Week, behold an Angel of the Lord descended from Heaven, and, after a great Earthquake, came, and rolled away the Stone from the Door of the Sepulchre, and sat upon it. It was an *Angel*, that brought the first *glad Tidings* of our Lord's Incarnation, and Birth, and it is an Angel, that is now employed to be the first Preacher and Publisher of his Resurrection: for *fear* (*a*) *not*, says he to the Women, that we come to the Sepulchre, *I know that ye seek Jesus, that was crucified, he is not here, he is risen; come see the Place where the Lord lay.* This *bright* Appearance of the Angel however, together with the *violent* Shock of the Earthquake, so amazed and terrified the *Keepers*, that they left their Watch, and, hastening to the *Jewish Sanhedrim*, told them what they had seen and felt; while, to give the greater Credit to their Report, (*b*) *the Graves were opened, and many dead Bodies of Saints, which slept, arose, and went into the holy City and appeared unto many.* Thus the *Providence* of God took care, that the *Circumstances*, preceding his Son's Resurrection, should be defective in nothing, that might render the *Proof* of the Fact undeniable. But then, after his Resurrection, the full Evidence of its Truth and Reality will be best perceived, by attending to the *different* Times and Places, wherein he appeared, (*c*) *not to all the People* (as the Apostle declares) *but to Witnesses, chosen before of God, (d) to whom he shewed himself alive after his Passion, by many infallible Proofs, being seen of them forty Days, and speaking of the Things pertaining to the Kingdom of God.*

And after his Resurrection.

THE *first* Person, that he shewed himself to after his Resurrection, was *Mary Magdalane*, who, upon a sudden Glance, and as it was then about Day Break, mistook him for the *Gardiner*; but, at his calling her by Name, immediately knew his Voice, and heard these gracious Words from his Mouth: (*e*) *Touch me not, for I am not yet ascended to my Father; but go to my Brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father, and to my God, and your God.* His *next* Appearance was to two other Women, who had been told by the Angels that *he was risen*, and, upon their first Sight of him, were so perfectly assured it was he, that *(f) they came, and held him by the Feet, and worshipped him.* The *third* Time of his Appearance was to two of his Disciples going to *Emmaus*, whom he joined, on the Road, in the Form of a *Traveller*, entered into Discourse with them, and (*g*) *expounded to them, in all the Scriptures, the Things concerning himself*; but, as they sat down to meat, *and* (*h*) *their Eyes were open, that they knew him, he vanished out of their Sight.* His *next* Appearance (as it is recorded in * the *Hebrew Gospel of the Nazarens*, from whence (*i*) St. *Paul* is supposed to have had his Information) was to St. *James*, who is reported to have bound himself by solemn Oath *not to eat Bread*, until he had seen his Lord risen from the dead, which might be an Inducement (as the *Tradition* will have it) to his appearing to him sooner, than any of the rest of the Apostles. The *next*, he was seen to, in all Probability was (*k*) St. *Peter*, to the Intent that he might comfort him in his Dejection, and to give him Assurance, that his great Sin, in *denying* his Master, was quite obliterated and forgiven: and, on the same Day, in the Evening, when *ten* of the Apostles were (*l*) *met together in a private Place, for Fear of the Jews, he came in, as the Doors were shut, and, standing in the midst of them, shewed them his Hands and Feet*, requiring them to *look upon him, and handle him*, and to convince

* In this Gospel (which was of no small *Authority* in the primitive Church) it is related, "that our "Lord, immediately after he had risen, went, and appeared to *James*; for *James* had vowed, that "Hour, that he drank of the *Cup of the Lord* (*viz.* in the Sacrament) he would not eat Bread, till "he saw him risen from the Dead. The Lord when he appeared to him, said, bring hither Bread, "and a Table, and he took the Bread, and blessed, and brake it, and gave it to *James* the just, and "said to him, my Brother, eat the Bread, for the Son of Man is risen from among them, that sleep." To this Tradition St. *Paul* very probably alludes in 1 Cor. xv. 5. but then the Word, which we translate *afterwards*, must be rendered, as it is in several Places *besides*, and so the Sense will be, *moreover he appeared to* James, without denoting the Order of the Time. *Tillotson*'s Ser. Vol. III.

(*a*) Matt. xxviii. 5, 6. (*b*) Matt. xxvii. 52, 53. (*c*) Acts x. 41. (*d*) Acts i. 3. (*e*) John xx. 17. (*f*) Matt. xxviii. 9. (*g*) Luke xxiv. 27. (*h*) Ver. 31. (*i*) 1 Cor. xv. 7. (*k*) Ver. 5. (*l*) Joh. xx. 19.

convince them farther, that he was no *Spirit, called for ſome Meat, and did eat before them.*

THIS, in all likelihood, was the *ſixth* Time of *his ſhewing himſelf alive, after his Paſſion*, on his Reſurrection Day. *Thomas* however, being abſent at this Time, took all, that was told him, for a mere *Deception*, and (*a*) openly declaring, that he would believe nothing of the Matter, without a plain and *palpable* Demonſtration, had, in a ſhort Time, a *Conviction* of his own chooſing; for, *after eight Days*, Jeſus came into the Room again, where all the *eleven* were met together, and calling unto (*b*) *Thomas, reach hither thy Finger, and behold my Hands, and reach hither thy Hand, and thruſt it into my Side, and be not faithleſs, but believing*, he drew this frank and full Acknowledgment from him, *my Lord, and my God. Thomas* afterwards, in (*c*) Company with *ſix* more, that went a *fiſhing* in the Sea of *Tiberias*, had a farther Confirmation of his Faith: For, by a *miraculous Draught* of Fiſh, and a Dinner prepared, or rather *created* for them, when they came on Shore, they could not but all perceive, that it was he himſelf, *though* (*d*) *none of them durſt aſk him, who art thou? knowing that it was the Lord.* His *ninth* Appearance was of a more publick Nature, on a Mountain in *Galilee* (ſuppoſed to be mount *Thabor*) where he appointed a *general meeting*, as it were, of all his Diſciples and Followers, who were (*e*) *above five hundred in all, moſt of them then alive*, to bear Teſtimony to the *Fact*, at the Time when St. *Paul* wrote his *firſt* Epiſtle to the *Corinthians, though ſome were fallen aſleep.* His *tenth*, and laſt Appearance, while on Earth, was on the Day of his Aſcenſion; when, (*f*) *leading his Diſciples forth, as far as Bethany*, to a certain Part of the *Mount of Olives, he there lift up his Hands, and bleſſed them; but while he was doing this, was parted from them, and carried up into Heaven*, in the Sight and Preſence of them all; and, to confirm the Teſtimony of their Senſes in this particular, (*g*) two Angels *ſtood* by, and aſſured them, that he was not only gone up to Heaven, but ſhould likewiſe return, in the ſame Manner, as they had ſeen him aſcend; whereupon *they kneeled down, and worſhipped* his Divinity upon the Spot, and (*h*) they *returned to Jeruſalem with great Joy.*

SUCH were the *Appearances*, which Chriſt vouchſafed to his Diſciples after he was riſen from the dead. And in theſe we ſee we have Evidences of all Kinds, to engage and corroborate our Belief. The (*i*) weaker *Sex*, who ſhewed more *Courage* and Conſtancy at our Lord's Crucifixion, than the Men did, had the Honour of being the *firſt* Witneſſes of his Reſurrection; but, if Women ſhould be thought too *weak* and credulous, we have a *Counterpoiſe* in the obſtinate Incredulity of St. *Thomas*. If a few *mean* and *illiterate* Perſons may be ſuppoſed capable of being *deluded*, we can never imagine, that *five hundred* and more could all be deceived together, at the ſame Time, and in the ſame Inſtance; or if *all Mankind* might be under a Deception in this Point, yet, who ſhall dare to ſay, that God was the Cauſe of their falling into it? as he certainly muſt be, upon the Suppoſition, that he impowered a Phantom, or Spectre, to work a real Miracle, in Confirmation of a mere *Fiction*; ſent his holy Angels to teſtify a *Falſhood*; in the Sight of a Multitude of Spectators, took a known Impoſtor up into Heaven, (*k*) *Set him on the right Hand of the Throne of the Majeſty*, and the avowed Maintainers of this Cheat, (*l*) *bore them witneſs, both with Signs and Wonders, and with divers Miracles and Gifts of the Holy Ghoſt.*

The Infallibility *of this Evidence.*

THUS does the *Truth* and Reality of our Lord's Reſurrection reſt *finally* on the *Veracity* and *Omnipotence* of God. To preſerve, or reſtore a mortal Body from Corruption; to *reaſſume* it, or to animate it a ſecond Time with a new Life, ſeems a Taſk too difficult for any created Being, not aſſiſted by God; but (*m*) that our bleſſed Saviour, who was himſelf a divine Perſon, and, conſequently, endued with the Power of God, might, by his own unbounded Activity, reſtore the Body, he had choſen, to its former Union, eſpecially within the Space of *three Days*, is a Matter of no difficult Conception. Though therefore the Glory of raiſing Chriſt from the dead, in more than *thirty* Paſſages of the *new* Teſtament, is aſcribed

The efficient *Cauſe of Chriſt's Reſurrection.*

(*a*) John xx. 25. (*b*) Ver. 27, 28. (*c*) John xxi. 4. (*d*) Ver. 12. (*e*) 1 Cor. xv. 6
(*f*) Luke xxiv. 50, 51. (*g*) Acts i. 10, 11. (*h*) Luke xxiv. 52. (*i*) Sam. *Johnſon*'s Ser. Vol. I.
(*k*) Heb. viii. 1. (*l*) Heb. ii. 4. (*m*) *Rogers*'s Ser.

ed to God the Father, yet it is not ſo aſcribed, as to exclude the other *two* Perſons in the *Sacred Trinity*. In the *Order* of Nature, and, in ſuch Actions, as are common to them all, the Father is ſuppos'd to have the Precedency; but, when our Saviour tells the *Jews*, (*a*) that, after they had *deſtroy'd the Temple* of his Body, he *would raiſe it up in three Days*, (*b*) *having the ſame Power to take his Life up again*, that *he had to lay it down*; and, when the Apoſtle informs the *Romans*, that by (*c*) *the Spirit* of God it was, *that Jeſus was raiſed up from the Dead*, and that, at the laſt Day, *their mortal Bodies were to be quicken'd* by the powerful Working of the *ſame* Spirit; there is no Doubt to be made, but that the *Son* and *Holy Ghoſt*, being both of the ſame *Eſſence*, and, conſequently, of the ſame Power with the Father, were *equally* concern'd in the Reſurrection of Chriſt.

The Neceſſity. ST. *Peter*, in the firſt Sermon, he made to the *Jews*, aſſerts, with great Confidence, the *Neceſſity* of Chriſt's being raiſed from the Dead: (*d*) *him, being delivered by the determinate Counſel and Foreknowledge of God, ye have taken*, ſays he, *and, by wicked Hands, have crucified, and ſlain; but God hath raiſed him up, having looſed the Pains of Death, becauſe it was not poſſible that he ſhould be holden of it. It was not poſſible*, becauſe the great Creator of the Univerſe, to whom all Things are equally eaſy, was concern'd in the Work: he formed the World out of Nothing: he inſpired Man's Soul at firſt into his Body; and, with the ſame Facility, no Doubt, he could reinfuſe it, when it was ſeparated, though the *Strength* of the *Terms*, wherein the Apoſtle expreſſes it, (*e*) *the exceeding Greatneſs of his Power, according to the working of his mighty Power, which he wrought in Chriſt, when he raiſed him from the Dead*, is very remarkable. *It was not poſſible*, (*f*) becauſe the divine and human Nature in Chriſt were ſo *cloſely* joined together, that, even when his Body was divided from his Soul, it ceaſed not to maintain an intimate, and indiſſolvable Relation to his *Divinity*; and, as long as it did ſo, the *Bands* of Death, whenever he pleas'd, became but feeble and inſignificant, like the *Withs* and *Cords* upon *Sampſon*, while he was inſpired with the mighty Preſence, and Aſſiſtance of God's Spirit. *It was not poſſible*, becauſe the immutable Decree was paſt, that, *after two Days God would receive him*, and on *the third Day raiſe him up*; that he would *ſhew him the Paths of Life*, and the Corruption of the *Grave* ſhould not affect him; and therefore (*g*) *the Promiſe, which was made to the Fathers*, ſaith the Apoſtle, *he hath fulfilled the ſame unto us, their Children, in that he hath raiſed up Jeſus again, as it is written in the ſecond Pſalm, thou art my Son, this Day have I begotten thee. It was not poſſible*, becauſe Chriſt, having undertaken to atone the divine Diſpleaſure, and, by ſubſtituting himſelf in our Room, to pay off the *Wages of Sin*, which *is Death*, when once he had effected *this*, as our *Surety*, he had a rightful Claim to a Releaſe, becauſe he had abundantly ſatisfied our Debt, for *Satisfaction* diſarms *Juſtice*, and *Payment* cancels the *Bond*. *It was not poſſible*, I ſay, (*h*) becauſe, as Chriſt, by his Death, made an ample Satisfaction for him, and paid down the *Price* of our Redemption; there was a *Neceſſity*, that the World ſhould have ſome ſuch *Manifeſtation* of it, as might be a *Foundation* for a rational Belief. The Apoſtle expreſsly affirms, that (*i*) *Chriſt was crucified through Weakneſs*; and therefore had not his Reſurrection ſoon followed his Crucifixion, the *Scoff* of the *Jews* had been unanſwerable, (*k*) *he ſaved others, himſelf he cannot ſave*; if he be the Son of God, let him riſe from the Dead, or come out of the Grave, and *we will believe him*; but now, (*l*) *that he was declar'd to be the Son of God with Power, according to the Spirit of Holineſs, by the Reſurrection from the Dead*, all theſe Cavils are put to Silence, and the Apoſtle can with a juſt Aſſurance, tell his Enemies; (*m*) *The God of our Fathers raiſed up Jeſus, whom ye ſlew, and hanged on a Tree, him hath God exalted, with his right Hand, to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give Repentance to Iſrael, and Forgiveneſs of Sins, and we are Witneſſes of theſe Things.*

THESE are ſome of the Reaſons, why it was *impoſſible* that Chriſt ſhould long continue under the Confinement of Death: and, that he might make good his Pretenſions, of being the *only begotten of the Father*,

And the En *and* Uſes *of*

(*a*) John ii. 19. (*b*) x. 18. (*c*) Rom. viii. 11. (*d*) Act. ii. 23, 24. (*e*) Eph. i. 19, 20.
(*f*) *South's* Ser. Vol. III. (*g*) Act. xiii. 32, 33. (*h*) South ibid. (*i*) 2 Cor. xiii. 4. (*k*) Mark xv. 31.
(*l*) Rom. i. 4. (*m*) Acts v. 30. &c.

Father, the great Prophet from Heaven, the *Mediator of a better Covenant*, the Publiſher of a new Religion and the future Judge of all Mankind; that being *deliver'd* (*a*) *for our Offences, and riſing again for our Juſtification*, he might demonſtrate the full Satisfaction he had made to the divine Juſtice, and that (*b*) *God had ſet him forth in all Ages of the World to be* a ſtanding *Propitiation through Faith in his Blood*; that, (*c*) *being the Firſt-fruits of them that ſleep*, he might give us a comfortable Aſſurance of our own Reſurrection, at the laſt Day, (*d*) *when thoſe, that ſleep in Jeſus, ſhall God bring with him*; that, having taken Poſſeſſion himſelf, he might intitle his Brethren to (*e*) *an Inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reſerved in Heaven for them*; and that, having his Death and Reſurrection always in Remembrance, (*f*) *like as he was raiſed up by the Glory of the Father, even ſo we alſo ſhould walk in Newneſs of Life*, that (*g*) *when he ſhall appear, we may appear with him in Glory*; theſe and ſuch like, are the *Ends* and Uſes of this great Article of our Faith.

And why on the third Day.

The *Diſtance* of Time, which interven'd between our Saviour's Death and his Reſurrection, the *Creed* makes Mention of, in Conformity to the common Manner of *Speech*; (*h*) wherein, when we relate any Story, or *Matter of Fact*, we are apt to adjoin the Circumſtances of *Time* moſt commonly, many Times of *Place*, and ſometimes of other *Adjuncts*, as Signs and Arguments of the Certainty of the Thing, and of our own Aſſurance in affirming it. The *third Day*, after his Interment, was the Time determin'd by the Wiſdom of God for his Son's Reſurrection: A *ſhorter* Time would not have been ſufficient to have given every one Conviction, that he was *actually* dead, beyond the Poſſibility of being recover'd by any natural Means; and for a *longer*, there was no manner of Occaſion. (*i*) While therefore *Men's Memories* were freſh, and their *Fancies* buſy, and their *Mouths* open in Diſcourſe concerning his Death; while his Diſciples were overwhelm'd with Sorrow, their Hopes fruſtrated, their Spirits quite broke, and themſelves not daring to ſhew their Heads *for Fear of the Jews*; while the Witneſſes, God intended for the Confirmation of the Fact, were preſent upon the Spot, *Enemies* watching, and *Friends* attending the Event; then was the moſt proper Time for him to exert his divine Power in raiſing up *Jeſus* from the dead. But this might not be all.

The Time of our Lord's Reſurrection was on the Day, ſubſequent to the *Jewiſh Sabbath*, and that Sabbath (as (*k*) the *Evangeliſt* obſerves) was not only an *ordinary* weekly Sabbath, but the great annual Feſtival of the Paſſover likewiſe, which happen'd, on that Year, to be *coincident*. Now the *Obſervation* of the Sabbath was enjoin'd the *Jews*, not only in Memory of the World's *Creation*, but (*l*) of their Releaſe likewiſe from the *Egyptian Bondage*, as the Paſſover was directly inſtituted for that Purpoſe. Since then the great *Revolution* of the whole World, its *ſecond* and better Creation to a State of Immortality; and ſince a Deliverance of much more Conſequence, and a Redemption far more *plenteous*, than that from the Land of Slavery, was effected on the bleſſed Day of our Lord's Reſurrection, it hence came to paſs, that the Obſervation of the *Jewiſh Paſſover* was ſuperſeded by an annual *Feſtival* in Commemoration of his riſing, and the *Obligation* of the Day, which was then the *Sabbath*, died, and was buried with him, but, in a Kind of *diurnal Tranſmutation* (as (*m*) one expreſſes it) reviv'd again at his Reſurrection.

* In what religious Manner the *annual* Return of his Reſurrection (which we call *Eaſter-Day*) was obſerv'd by the *primitive* Church,

Which, upon ſundry Accounts, was called the Lord's Day.

* In what high Veneration they had the Feaſt of *Eaſter-Day* appears by their frequently calling it the *Queen of Days, the deſirable Feſtival of our Salvation, the Foundation of our Peace, the Deſtruction of our Enmity with God, our Conqueſt over Death and Sin*, and what *ſo far exceeds all other Feſtivals*, even among thoſe that were inſtituted in Honour of Chriſt, *as the Sun does the other Stars*. It was a Day of great *rejoicing*, famous for Mercy and Charity, for Releaſe given to *Captives*, Freedom to *Slaves*, Liberty to *Priſoners*, Liberality to the *Poor*, and Relief to the Diſtreſſed, as very congruous and ſuitable to that Day. For what more fitting (ſays one of the *Ancients* obſerves) than that thoſe, who are in Want or Diſtreſs of any Kind, ſhould be enabl'd to *rejoice* at that Time, when we remember the common Fountain of all our Mercies. *Cave*'s Prim. Chriſt. and *Bingham*'s Antiq.

(*a*) Rom. iv. 25. (*b*) Rom. iii. 25. (*c*) 1 Cor. xv. 20. (*d*) 1 Theſſ. iv. 14. (*e*) 1 Pet. i. 4. (*f*) Rom. vi. 4. (*g*) Col. iii. 4. (*h*) *Barrow* Vol. I. (*i*) *Barrow* Vol. I. (*k*) John xix. 14. (*l*) Deut. v. 15. (*m*) *Pearſon* on the Creed.

Church, we may beſt inform ourſelves from the learned *Compilers* of its *Antiquities*: But that the weekly Return of it (which we * call *Sunday*) was, from the very firſt, a Time appointed for the more ſolemn Meeting of Chriſtians for the Performance of *divine Service*, we have ſeveral Teſtimonies, both from *ſacred*, and † *profane* Authors. On this Day, which the Goſpel calls *the firſt Day of the Week*, were (*a*) *the Diſciples aſſembled for Fear of the Jews*, when, in a ſhort Space after his Reſurrection, our Lord appear'd to them, but *Thomas* was abſent. On this Day, the next Week (*b*) *they were met together* again in Expectation of another Appearance, and then *Thomas* was with them. On this Day, (*c*) *they were all, with one Accord, in one Place*, when the *Holy Ghoſt* came viſibly down upon them, and, by St. *Peter*'s Preaching, *three thouſand Souls* were converted, and baptized. On this Day (*d*) St. *Paul, taking his Leave at Troas, preached to the Diſciples, who came together to break Bread*, which is always underſtood of celebrating the Sacrament: On this Day, (*e*) he gave Directions to the Church of *Corinth*, concerning the *Collections*, that were to be made, in their religious Aſſemblies, for the Relief of their poor ſuffering Brethren: And to this Day he ſeems to refer, when he exhorteth the *Hebrews*, (*f*) *to hold faſt the Profeſſion of their Faith without wavering, and not to forſake the aſſembling of themſelves together, as the Manner of ſome was.* Thus the *firſt Day of the Week* came univerſally to be obſerv'd by Chriſtians, (*g*) who conſtantly met together for *Prayer*, for the *Expoſition* of the Scriptures, for the *Celebration* of the Sacraments, and other publick Duties of Religion; and upon theſe Accounts it (*h*) was generally called *the Lord's Day*; under that Denomination was tranſmitted to the *Church* of God, and ſo continued in all Ages.

The OBJECTION.

" BUT how long ſoever it has con-
" tinued, it was certainly, at firſt,
" a bold *Stretch* of Power in the Apo-
" ſtles (for apoſtolick Authority is all
" that is pretended to) to *diſannul* a Sab-
" bath of God's own Inſtitution, and that
" in the moſt ſolemn Manner imagina-
" ble, and, in Oppoſition to it, to ſet
" up another, in Memory of a ſup-
" poſed Event, that perhaps never came
" to paſs. The Apoſtles, we know, were
" *plain* and *ſimple* Men, addicted perhaps
" to *Superſtition* and not a little intoxicat-
" ed with the Notion of *Apparitions*. Their
" Maſter had publickly foretold his Re-
" ſurrection, and ſtaked the whole Me-
" rit of his Pretenſions upon it; and they,
" as being his conſtant Followers, for
" their own Reputation, as well as his,
" might wiſh and deſire it, and, as any
" ſtrong Deſire naturally diſpoſes to a
" Facility of Belief, they might be apt
" to perſuade themſelves, that the Event
" had indeed anſwered his Predictions;
" and when once they were thus per-
" ſuaded, it is no uncommon Thing for
" Men of this Temper to be exceeding
" *poſitive* in Matters that have no Foun-
" dation at all. This however is evident
" from their own Account, that the Time
" of his continuing in the Grave was not
" what he foretold the Multitude; for,
" ſince it is manifeſt, that he was in-
" terred on the *ſixth* Day, or *Friday*,
" about Sun ſetting, and roſe again on
" the *firſt* Day, or *Sunday* early in the
" Morning, the longeſt Time of his be-
" ing buried could be but *thirty ſix Hours*,
" or

* It is frequently ſo called by the *Ancients* (eſpecially by *Juſtin Martyr*, and *Tertullian*) becauſe it happen'd upon that Day of the Week, which by the *Heathens* was dedicated to the *Sun*, and therefore as being beſt known to them under that Denomination, the Fathers commonly made Uſe of it in their *Apologies* to the *heathen* Governors. Not only ſo, but we may obſerve farther, that this *Title* continued after the World became Chriſtian, and ſeldom it is, that it paſſeth under any other Name in the *Imperial Edicts* of the firſt Chriſtian Emperors. *Cave's* Prim. Chriſt.

† This doubtleſs was the Meaning of *Pliny*, when, giving the Emperor *Trajan* an Account of the Chriſtians, he tells him, that they were wont to meet to worſhip Chriſt on a *ſtit certain Day*, by which he can be reaſonably underſtood to deſign no other, than *the Lord's Day*: For though they probably met at other Times, yet of this he only takes Notice, becauſe it was their moſt *publick* and ſolemn Convention, and what in a Manner ſwallowed up all the reſt. *Cave*'s Prim. Chriſt.

(*a*) John xx. 19. (*b*) Ver. 26. (*c*) Act. ii. 1, &c. (*d*) Act. xx. 7, &c. (*e*) 1 Cor. xvi. 1, 2. (*f*) Heb. x. 23, 25. (*g*) *Cave's* Prim. Chriſt. (*h*) Rev. i. 10.

" or thereabouts, which fall vaſtly ſhort " of the *three Days and three Nights*, " that he ſpoke of. But, even after he " was riſen, the Manner of his appear- " ing (as they repreſent it,) was ſo ve- " ry odd and unaccountable, diſguiſing " himſelf ſometimes in one Shape, and " ſometimes in another; *now* caſting a " Miſt before his Diſciples Eyes, that " they ſhould not know him; *anon* com- " ing ſilently upon them, when the Doors " were ſhut, and then, after a ſhort Stay, " *vaniſhing out of their Sight* again, that " the whole looks liker the Deluſions of " a *Phantom*, than any Indication of a " real living Subſtance; ſince had he been " *ſuch*, we cannot imagine, how he could " have entered the Room, when the Doors " were ſhut, without paſſing through the " *Wall*, or the *Key-hole*, which is not " ſo conſiſtent with the *Dimenſions* of an " human Body, or how the two Diſci- " ples, going to *Emmaus*, could poſſibly, " in ſo long a Walk, have been *witholden* " from knowing him, had he been the " ſame individual Perſon, that he was be- " fore his Crucifixion. A Reſurrection " from the dead is a Thing ſo contrary " to the Courſe of Nature, and to the " univerſal Experience, and Senſe of Man- " kind, that to gain Credit to ſuch a Mi- " racle, it would have been his Buſineſs, " one would think, inſtead of ſhewing " himſelf to his *Friends* and *Followers* " only, after he was riſen, to have made " an open and triumphant Entry into *Je- " ruſalem*, or, at leaſt, to have appeared " to the *High Prieſts*, the *Scribes*, and " *Phariſees*, and all the unbelieving *Jews*, " in the Temple, or in the Market-Place, " now in the Time of the *Paſſover*, when " he might have had a vaſt Number of " Converts to his new Religion: but ſince " he neglected this Opportunity, and kept " himſelf ſecret, and concealed from all, " but thoſe of his own *Party*, this gives " ſome Umbrage to think, that there might " be ſome Truth in the Report, which " the *Jewiſh* Rulers ſpread abroad, *viz.* " *that* (*a*) *his Diſciples came by Night, " and ſtole him away, while the Soldiers " were aſleep.*"

The Chriſtian Sabbath *very probably of* divine,

AFTER our bleſſed Lord's Reſurrecti- on, the Author of the *Acts* acquaints us, that he converſed with his Apoſtles *for- ty* (*b*) *Days, ſpeaking of the Things pertaining to the Kingdom of God*, i. e. giving them *Inſtructions* concerning the Affairs of the Goſpel-Diſpenſation, whereof he made them *Miniſters*, and of the Oeconomy of his *Church*, which they were to collect, conſtitute, and govern. Now as no Church can be conſtituted without the Appointment of ſacred *Offices*, and no ſuch Offices can be regularly performed, without the Deſignation of a proper *Time*, it can hardly be imagined, that, among the *other Things*, relating *to this Kingdom of God*, the ſetting apart a *Day* for religious Purpoſes ſhould eſcape our Saviour's Conſideration: and if ſuch a Time was to be ſet apart, which can we ſuppoſe ſo *proper*, as the weekly Return of that Day, wherein not only the *Beginning* of the Creation of the World, but the *Completion* likewiſe of its Redemption, in the Reſurrection of the *Prince of Life*, was tranſacted. As therefore our Saviour inſtituted two ſolemn *Ordinances* in his Church, the *Euchariſt*, a little before his Paſſion, and the *Sacrament of Baptiſm*, a little after his Return from the Grave; ſo it is preſumable, that he appointed the *firſt Day of the Week* (whereon theſe Ordinances were to be adminiſtred) to be a perpetual *Feſtival* in Memory of his Reſurrection, even unto the End of the World; and that the Apoſtles might not think neceſſary to inſert it in their Writings, becauſe every Week their own Practice and Obſervation of it declared its divine Inſtitution.

But ſuppoſing, that this *Change* of the Sabbath was of *apoſtolick* Authority only; yet who can doubt, but that, when Chriſt had given theſe Ambaſſadors of his full Power and Commiſſion to ſettle Churches every where, and, by the Miſſion of the holy Ghoſt, had promiſed to give them full Inſtructions, *to lead them into all Truth*, and to enable them to work all Kind of Miracles in Confirmation of what they appointed; who can doubt, I ſay, but that their Abrogation of the *Jewiſh* Sabbath, and introducing another in its Stead, was a ſufficient Validity in the Chriſtian Church. Their (*c*) *chooſing an Apoſtle* into their Number, *ordaining Deacons*, *appointing Elders*, preſcribing *Rules* of Faith and Practice, inflicting *Cenſures*, and enjoining whatever was neceſſary to the *Peace* and

At leaſt apoſtolick *Inſtitution.*

(*a*) Matt. xxviii. 13. (*b*) Acts i. 3. (*c*) A. B. *Potter* on Ch. Government.

and Edification of the Church, or the *Order* and Decency of divine Worſhip are ſufficient Demonſtrations of their Power; and, what Notions they had of the *Obligation*, not only of the *Jewiſh Sabbath*, but of the whole *Levitical Law* (ſome few Precepts, which were neceſſary for thoſe Times, excepted) we may learn from their Determination at *Jeruſalem*, upon an Appeal from the Churches in other Countries, which was not *to* (*a*) *burden them* with any Part of the *ceremonial* Law of *Moſes*: and therefore, ſince (*b*) *Chriſt has blotted out the Hand-writing of Ordinances, that was againſt us* (as the Apoſtle argues) *taking it out of the Way, and nailing it to his Croſs, let no Man judge you in Meat, or in Drink, or in Reſpect of an Holy Day, or of the New-Moon, or of the Sabbath Days, which are a Shadow of good Things to come, but the Body is of Chriſt.*

THOUGH therefore the *Commandment* for the Obſervation of the *Jewiſh* Sabbath, was proclaimed of old with great Pomp and Solemnity, yet we ought to remember, that he, who enacted it then, was the ſame Perſon, who abrogated it afterwards, who in the Time of his Miniſtry, all along declared himſelf (*c*) *the Lord of the Sabbath*, having Authority to relax, or cancel its Obligation when he pleaſed; who, after his Reſurrection, had (*d*) *all Power given unto him in Heaven and in Earth*; and who, of that Power communicated to his Apoſtles, and their Succeſſors, whatever was neceſſary for the good Government of his Church; and therefore whether this *Alteration* was by *his*, or their Authority, 'tis the ſame Thing ſince they acted as his *Delegates*, and his Declaration thereupon is—(*e*) *he that heareth you, heareth me, and he that deſpiſeth you, deſpiſeth me, and he that deſpiſeth me, deſpiſeth him that ſent me.*

The Witneſſes of our Lord's Reſurrection had ſufficient Evidence.

THE Apoſtles, we acknowledge, were *plain* and *ſimple* Men; but, as they had a perfect Uſe of all their Senſes, they were as good Judges of what they ſaw, heard, and felt, as the greateſt *Philoſopher* breathing, and therefore, in the Caſe now before us, were as competent Witneſſes. (*f*) For it was not *once* only, but *often*, that our Lord appeared to them; and that not only to *ſome* of them, when ſeparated from the reſt, but to *all* of them, when aſſembled together, and when they were capable of ſatisfying each other by Enquiries made, at the ſame Time, into the Truth of the ſame *Fact*, and, conſequently, of giving an united Teſtimony to it. He appeared to them, not as *Spectres* do in the dark, but in the broad Day Light, ſometimes at Places, where he had appointed them before to meet him; ſometimes *occaſionally*, as they were travelling on the Way, or ſitting at Meat, when their Minds were freeſt from the Clouds of *Melancholy*, and their Imaginations leaſt liable to be impoſed upon. Nay, himſelf eat and drank with them, and, by that Means, gave them Leiſure to recover themſelves from that *Surprize*, which the firſt Sight of him might occaſion, and, with compoſed Minds, to hearken to all, that he ſhould ſay; and, that nothing might be wanting to ſatisfy them to the uttermoſt, he was contented not only to be ſeen and heard, but even handled by them, and, for a conſiderable Time, both repeated his Converſations with them *often*, and continued them *long*, as appears from the Subject of ſome of them, particularly of that, (*g*) *where he is ſaid to have begun at Moſes, and all the Prophets, and to have expounded to them, in all the Scriptures, the Things concerning himſelf.* Now, in all this Series of Tranſactions, how can it be imagined, that ſuch a Multitude of People ſhould, for ſo long a Time, be in a Dream, and under a ſtrong and continued Deluſion? Men could never fancy, that they ſaw a Perſon *forty Days together*; that he did eat and drink in their Preſence, that he argued, and expounded the Scriptures to them; convinced them of ſeveral Errors and Miſtakes; gave them Promiſes, Rules, and Inſtructions for their Comfort, and the Government of a Church; gave out Commiſſions, and adminiſtered holy Ordinances to them; that he led them out to the Mount of Olives, and from thence was carried up to Heaven in a Cloud, while they were looking on; and after all this Men could never fancy, I ſay; and therefore they muſt certainly have had a full Conviction of the Truth of it from the Teſtimony of their Senſes.

Were not over-credulous.

THEY were *plain and ſimple Perſons*, had a real Affection for their Maſter, and perhaps ſome Notions of the common Doc-

trine

(*a*) Acts xv. 28. (*b*) Col. ii. 14, &c. (*c*) Mark ii. 28. (*d*) Matt. xxviii. 18. (*e*) Luke x. 16.
(*f*) *Atterbury's* Ser. Vol. III. (*g*) Luke xxiv. 27.

trine of *Apparitions*; but ſo far were they from being *over-credulous* in the Affair, we are now conſidering, that their *Slowneſs* to apprehend and believe it is really to be wondered at. Five ſeveral Times had he plainly foretold them, that, at *Jeruſalem*, he was to ſuffer many Things, there to be put to Death, and, on the third Day, to be raiſed again. All this, 'tis ſaid, *they* (*a*) *were ſorrowful* to hear, but, what he ſhould mean by riſing again (*b*) *they underſtood not, but queſtioned with one another concerning it.* They could not but be ſenſible what a Reſurrection meant, but their Caſe was plainly this——They had imbibed the Notion, common among the *Jews*, that (*c*) *Chriſt*, whenever he came, *was to abide for ever*, and, being fully perſuaded, (*d*) that their Maſter was the Chriſt, who was to live for ever, they could not conceive how he could die, and, conſequently, how, or in what Manner he could riſe again. When therefore they ſaw him crucified, they gave up all for gone, and when he was riſen again, ſo far were they from running into an haſty Belief of it, that it was ſome Time before they would credit their own Eyes, much leſs the Teſtimony of any, that had ſeen him.

When *Mary Magdalene* returned from the Sepulchre, and told them, that he was certainly riſen, and had been ſeen by her, (*e*) *they believed not.* When two other Women, Perſons of known Integrity, came with the ſame Account, (*f*) *their Words ſeemed to them to be idle Tales.* When the two Diſciples from a Village in the Country returned with *great Joy*, and told the various Circumſtances of his appearing to them (*g*) *to the Reſidue, neither believed they them.* When the Apoſtles, being aſſembled together, had an evident Sight of him, and an Offer of any *Demonſtration*, they could deſire, (*h*) *they were terrified and affrightened*, ſays the Text, but, not daring to truſt their own Eyes, they rather believed, *that they had ſeen a Spirit*; and when they related all this to *Thomas*, ſo far was he from believing their Report, that he thought them all impoſed on, and poſitively declared, that, as for his Part, without ſeeing and feeling the *Marks* and *Wounds* made by his Crucifixion, he would not be convinced, that he was reſolved on. (*i*) So far were the Apoſtles, and firſt Witneſſes, from inclining to a fond Belief of their Lord's Reſurrection, that they ſeemed rather *obſtinately* bent againſt it, inſomuch, that they would neither credit one another, nor their own ſelves, but cavilled at every freſh Inſtance, and raiſed new Scruples, and new Difficulties perpetually, until the Matter was ſo very evident, that no Room was left for any farther Doubt, and then they teſtified and proclaimed it with all Boldneſs and Intrepidity, though it were at the certain Expence of their Lives: but of this more hereafter.

In what Senſe our Lord roſe on the third Day, *or in* three Days *and three* Nights.

There is a *Variety* of Diction indeed among the *Evangeliſts* in Relation to the *Time* of our Lord's Reſurrection. *In three Days, after three Days, after three Days and three Nights*, or (what moſt commonly occurs) *on the third Day*, are the ſeveral Expreſſions made uſe of upon this Occaſion: But, as it is uſual in all Nations to reckon the Night into the Day, whenever they reckon by ſo many Days, theſe ſeveral *Forms* of Speech amount to the ſame Thing; and as, (*k*) according to the *Idiom* of the *Hebrew* Language, he cannot be ſaid *to riſe on the third Day*, between whoſe Death and Reſurrection any more, than one Day, has intervened, ſo the other Expreſſions, that leſs frequently occur, ought to be ſo interpreted, as to be reduced to this of *the third Day*, which we find ſo often repeated. To clear up this Matter however, we muſt obſerve farther, that the *Jews* have a Way of *Computation*, in ſome Reſpects, different from us. They, (*l*) as well as we, put frequently a *Part* of the Day for the *whole:* but then, whereas we reckon our Days (I mean our *natural* Days of twenty four Hours) from *twelve* a Clock at Night to twelve the next Night, they reckon from one *Sun-ſet* to the next Sun-ſet, and all the Time between them they call a *Day*, even as *Moſes* did, when he ſays, (*m*) *the Evening and the Morning were the firſt Day.* Now admitting this Manner of Computation, and Reckoning, that the firſt Day began on *Thurſday* at Sun-ſet; ſince our Saviour died on *Friday*, about *three* in the Afternoon, by putting a *Part for the whole*, here we have

(*a*) Matt. xvii. 22, 23. (*b*) Mark ix. 10. (*c*) John xii. 34. (*d*) Evidence of the Reſur. cleared. (*e*) Mark xvi. 11. (*f*) Luke xxiv. 11. (*g*) Mark xvi. 13. (*h*) Luke xxiv. 37. (*i*) *Stanhope*'s Ep. and Goſp. Vol. II. (*k*) *Pearſon* on the Creed. (*l*) Dr. *Pierce*'s Vind. Part I. (*m*) Gen. i. 5.

one Day. *Saturday* is allowed on all Hands to be *another* Day: and, ſince the *third* Day began on *Saturday* at Sun-ſet, and our Saviour roſe on the Morning following, that Part of the Day, being likewiſe put for the whole, is fairly computed for the *third* Day: and thus we have the Prediction accompliſhed; ſince our bleſſed Lord did riſe from the dead on the third Day in a proper Senſe, *and was three Days and three Nights in the Heart of the Earth*, according to a *Figure*, that is commonly made uſe of in all Languages. That the *Jews* were accuſtomed to this Way of Reckoning, *viz.* of putting a Part of the Day for the whole, is evident from one of the greateſt Points of their Law, the *Circumciſion of a Male Child*, which was to be done on the *eighth Day*; (*a*) and yet they accounted the Day of the *Birth*, one, and the Day of the *Circumciſion*, the other, even though the Birth was at the *Cloſe* of the *firſt*, and the Circumciſion at the *Beginning* of the *laſt* Day: and why ſhould not the ſame Way of Reckoning then be admitted in the Caſe of our Lord's Interment, to make it amount to *three Days*, though we grant, that he died towards the Concluſion of the *firſt*, and roſe at the very Beginning of the *laſt Day*. The Truth is, ſince our Lord's Reſurrection came to paſs, during the Time that the Guards had the Sepulchre in keeping, 'tis the ſame Thing, whether he choſe to riſe in the Beginning, the Middle, or Cloſe of the Day; only it is a little more preſumable, that, after he had continued in the Grave long enough to convince the People of the *Certainty* of his Death, he ſhould take the firſt Occaſion, conſiſtent with his own Predictions, of returning to Life again, in order to comfort and refreſh the drooping and deſponding Minds of his Diſciples.

The various Manner *of his appearing* accounted for.

THE *Viſits*, which he made them at firſt after his Reſurrection, were ſhort, and ſudden, and interrupted; but this was done in pure Kindneſs to them, to let them into the Knowledge of this wonderful Event by ſlow and gentle Degrees, (*b*) leſt too ſudden a Recovery from the Deſpair, they were in upon the account of his Death, might make their Joy too exceſſive and tumultuous for them to bear. But when ſome few Interviews of this Kind were paſſed, his Converſation with them became as free, familiar, and permanent, as we have attempted to deſcribe it. One great *End* indeed of his appearing to them was to convince them of the *Identity* of his Perſon, and the *Reality* of his Reſurrection Body; and therefore we find him calling to them, and ſaying, (*c*) *ſee my Hands and my Feet, that it is even I, handle me and ſee, for a Spirit has not Fleſh and Bones, as you ſee me have*: But then we deſtroy his whole Argument, if we think, that the Expreſſions of his coming to his Diſciples, *when the Doors were ſhut*, or *vaniſhing* ſuddenly *out of their* Sight, are to be underſtood in ſuch a Senſe, as may affect the *Subſtantiality* of the Body, he appeared in. The Principles of all Philoſophy teach us, that a Body, made of Fleſh and Bones, cannot *penetrate* through another of more Solidity; and therefore we may conclude that the Senſe of the (*d*) firſt Paſſage muſt be, that he came in at the Door, though his Diſciples ſaw not the Door open, nor him enter the Room, *until he was in the Midſt of them.* The Door might be upon the *Latch*, and ſo opened without any Noiſe, or, if it was never ſo firmly locked, why might not he, by the leaſt Beck of his Will, cauſe it to fall open before him upon his Approach, even as (*e*) *the Iron Gate* did to the Angel, ſent to conduct St. *Peter* out of Priſon? This Senſe of the Words is plain, and unforced, and ſtands clear of the *Abſurdity* of one *Body's penetrating* another: (*f*) though ſtill it muſt be owned, that, in this, and ſeveral other Tranſactions, our Saviour's Body, after his Reſurrection, was to be conſidered not as a *natural* but *ſupernatural* Body, *i. e.* of quite different Qualities from what it had before, notwithſtanding it was ſtill the ſame in Subſtance; and therefore, to argue from the State and natural Properties of ſuch Bodies, as we carry about with us, to thoſe of our Saviour's Body, after it was riſen from the dead, is a groſs Fallacy in Argumentation.

OUR Saviour indeed, after his Reſurrection, did not always appear in the *ſame* Manner; for why might not he, who acted by a *ſupernatural* Power in other Things, preſent himſelf, if he pleaſed, in different Shapes and Forms, either by differently

(*a*) The Trial of the Witneſſes. (*b*) The Trial. (*c*) Luke xxiv. 39. (*d*) John xx. 19.
(*e*) Acts xii. 10. (*f*) *South*'s Ser. Vol. V.

ferently qualifying his own Body, the *Object* offered to be ſeen, or by differently diſpoſing the *Organs* of Sight in ſuch, as were to behold it. To *Mary Magdalene* he appeared in the Habit of a *Gardener*, and to (*a*) *the two Diſciples*, travelling to *Emmaus*, in a different Dreſs, or *Form*, than what he was uſed to be ſeen in; and therefore no Wonder at all, that they walked, and converſed with him ſome Time, without perceiving who he was; ſince it often happens, that we do not know our moſt intimate Friends or Relations, when they have diſguiſed themſelves, on purpoſe to be concealed from us, eſpecially when we meet him at a Place, where we leaſt of all expected him, which was plainly the Caſe between the two Diſciples, and our Saviour, whom they ſuppoſed to be dead, and, from that Suppoſition, were, in a great Meaſure, hindered from recollecting him. St. *Luke* however ſeems to imply * a miraculous Interpoſition herein, by telling us, that *their Eyes were held, that they ſhould not know him*; and (*b*) the Reaſon of his thus concealing himſelf might be, thereby to take an Opportunity of diſcourſing with them more freely, than he could have had, if the Surprize of ſeeing one from the dead, and the Senſe of their Maſter's Authority reaſoning with them from the Scriptures, had been upon their Spirits. But as ſoon as he had ended his Diſcourſe, and the *Impediment* (be it what it will) was removed from their Eye-Sight, *they then knew him*, and, in a ſhort Time after, he conveyed himſelf ſecretly from them, or withdrew himſelf out of their Preſence; for, according to the *Original*, that is the whole Import of *his vaniſhing out of their Sight*, and can therefore be no tolerable Objection againſt the *Materiality* of our Lord's Body, when riſen, any more, than (*c*) *his hiding himſelf, when the Jews took up Stones to caſt at him*, or (*d*) when the *Multitude* would have thrown him down a Precipice, *his going through the midſt of them unſeen*, was againſt its *Reality*, when he was alive.

A Reſurrection not contrary to Reaſon.

To raiſe a dead Man to Life again, is certainly a great Miracle, contrary to common Experience, and the ſettled Courſe of Things; but, as it implies no *Contradiction* it cannot be impoſſible to God, nor is it indeed repugnant to any one *Maxim* of Reaſon. (*e*) "For my own Part (ſays "a very judicious Author) when I conſi- "der, how I live; that all the *animal* "Motions, neceſſary to my Life, are "independent on my Will; that my "*Heart* beats without my Conſent, and "without my Direction; that *Digeſtion* "and Nutrition are perform'd by Methods, "to which I am not conſcious; that my "*Blood* moves in a perpetual Round, "which is contrary to all known Laws of "Motion; I cannot but think, that the "Preſervation of my Life, in every Mo- "ment of it, is as great an Act of Pow- "er, as is neceſſary to raiſe a dead Man to "Life, and whoever ſo far reflects upon "his own *Being*, as to acknowledge that "he owes it to a ſuperior Power, muſt "needs think, that the ſame Power, which "gave Life to *ſenſeleſs* Matter at firſt, and "ſet all the *Springs* and Movements a go- "ing at the Beginning, can reſtore Life to a "dead Body: For ſurely it is not a *great-* "*er* Thing, to give Life to a Body *once* "*dead*, than to a Body that *never* was a- "live."

Of the Experience *of the* Jews.

THE *Jews* however liv'd under a Diſpenſation, different to all other Nations. (*f*) They in their Scriptures had ſeveral Examples upon Record of Perſons, who had been raiſed from the dead, and theſe might juſtly be look'd upon, as ſo many Proofs and Confirmations of the Credibility of our Saviour's Reſurrection, rather than that our Saviour's Reſurrection, after ſuch preceding Inſtances of the like Nature, ſhould be ſuppos'd to carry any Thing in it contradictory to common Senſe, or the Opinion of the World. That Expreſſion of *Herod*'s,

* For when it is ſaid in Gen. xxi. 19. *that God opened Hagar's Eyes, and ſhe ſaw a Well of Water:* In Numb. xxii. 31. that the *Lord opened the Eyes of Balaam, to ſee the Angel:* In 2 Kings vi. 17. *that the Lord opened the Eyes of the young Man, and he ſaw the Horſes and Chariots of Fire round about Eliſha*, and in the 20th Verſe that the *Lord opened the Eyes of the Hoſt of the King of Syria*, which were withheld from ſeeing, or ſtruck blind before, that they might ſee themſelves *in the midſt of Samaria:* In theſe, and the like Inſtances, we may ſuppoſe, that a ſupernatural Power was exerted, to caſt, as it were, a Miſt before their Eyes, and afterwards to diſperſe it; and that here, in the Caſe of the two *Diſciples*, Chriſt, ſome Way or other, *withheld their Eyes* from perceiving him, and then, removing that Impediment, opened their Eyes *that they knew*. *Whitby*'s Annot. on *Luke*. xxiv.

(*a*) Mark xvi. 12. (*b*) *Whitby* in Locum. (*c*) John viii. 59. (*d*) Luke iv. 30. (*e*) Trial of the Witneſſes p. 64. (*f*) *South*'s Ser. Vol. V.

rod's, upon his hearing of the Miracles of Chriſt, *It is* (*a*) *John, whom I have beheaded, he is riſen from the dead*; That Expreſſion, I ſay, utter'd immediately, and without any Strain of Thought, is enough to convince us, that the Reſurrection of ſome particular Perſons was no *ſtrange* and unheard of Notion with him, and the reſt of the *Jews*; nor can we forbear admiring, that the many great Miracles, our Saviour did among them, eſpecially that remarkable one of raiſing *Lazarus*, which was ſo lately ſeen with their Eyes, and, at that Time, ſo freſh in their Memories, ſhould not *ſmooth* the Way for the Belief of his own Reſurrection, which came to paſs within the Space of a few Days after.

Why our Lord did not appear to all the Jews.

INSTEAD of this their *Rulers*, we find, treated him all along with Scorn and Blaſphemy, reſiſted the Evidence of all his wonderful Works, imputed them to a *League* and Combination with the Devil; and the very *Lazarus*, we juſt now mention'd, conſpir'd to murder, (*b*) *becauſe that, by Reaſon of him, many of the Jews went away, and believed in Jeſus*, whom they purſued to the Croſs, with ſuch a Complication of Obſtinacy, Malice, and Cruelty, as can, in no other Inſtance, be parallell'd; and (*c*) therefore our Lord was ſo far from being oblig'd to afford his Murtherers any *extraordinary* Proof of his Reſurrection, that he might, with great Juſtice, have denied them any Evidence at all of it, and not ſuffer'd even the Teſtimony of his Apoſtles concerning it to have reached them. But ſuppoſe he had appear'd at *Noonday*, and in the moſt *publick* Places, *to all the People*, we can ſcarce ſuppoſe, that *all the People* would have believed in him. Some *honeſt* and well meaning Men would probably have done it, as they afterwards did to the Teſtimony of the Apoſtles; but the *malicious* and obſtinate would have found out Colours and Excuſes to evade the Force of the Evidence: (*d*) "What! (might one of them "ſay) though there has been an *Apparition* "in the Likeneſs of *Jeſus*, whom we cru- "cified; Muſt we neceſſarily from thence "conclude, that he is really alive? No "ſuch Matter! this is no new Thing; "Sorcery has often effected it: *Samuel* was "dead, and in his Grave, even then, "when the Witch of *Endor* made his "Likeneſs appear before *Saul*." Thus would they have reaſoned againſt their own Senſes, and kept their Infidelity in Spite of ſuch a *Demonſtration*. Or put the Caſe, he had appeared to the *High Prieſts* and *Rulers* chiefly, when we find, that neither the *Darkneſs* at his Death, nor the *Earthquake* at his Reſurrection, neither the Declaration of the *Centurion* on *the one*, nor the Confeſſion of the *Soldiers* on the *other* Occaſion, had made any Impreſſion upon them, we have Reaſon to think, that, thus hardened againſt all Conviction, they would have offered to lay violent Hands upon him; whereupon, had he vaniſhed out of their Sight (as he queſtionleſs would have done) what Concluſion would they have made from hence, but that they had ſeen a Ghoſt, a Spectre, or Apparition, or that their Senſes had been impoſed upon by ſome magical Illuſion, which would be far from having any Tendency to create in their Minds a true Belief that Chriſt was really riſen; or ſuppoſe, laſtly, that his appearing to theſe Men in Authority had really convinced them of the Truth of his Reſurrection, yet had they been wicked enough to deny it (as their bribing the Soldiers to do ſo, intimates they would;) this would have exceedingly *weakened* the Atteſtation of thoſe, who were the *appointed Witneſſes* of it. (*e*) He, who appeals to the Knowledge of another, for the Truth of a Matter of Fact, is ſo far from *gaining*, that he *loſes* Credit by the Appeal, if the other Perſon denies, that he knows any Thing of it. If therefore the Apoſtles had appealed to the Knowledge of the *Rulers*, (as it is likely they might) for the Truth of their Maſter's Reſurrection, the Rulers, by proteſting the contrary, would have made a terrible Advantage againſt the Chriſtians upon that Appeal. Herein therefore is manifeſt the Wiſdom of Chriſt, that, in making Choice of particular Witneſſes, viz. Such Perſons only, as would be ſo far from diſſembling their Knowledge, that they would always be ready to ſeal their Teſtimony with their Blood, he hath ſettled the Chriſtian Faith upon a better Foundation, than if he had entered *Jeruſalem in Triumph*, paid a Viſit to the *High Prieſt and Rulers*, and in the Temple and other Places of publick Concourſe, ſhewed himſelf openly, even in the Time of the Paſſover to the whole People of the *Jews*.

Nor to the Chief Prieſts *and* Rulers.

BUT ſince the Reſurrection of Chriſt did equally concern all Mankind, why is this

(*a*) Mark vi. 16. (*b*) John xii. 10, 11. (*c*) *Atterbury*'s Ser. Vol. III. (*d*) *Atterbury* ibid. (*e*) *Claget*'s Ser. Vol. I.

this Privilege of a *ſpecial* and particular Appearance required for the *Jews*, more than others, when every Nation under Heaven, every Age of the World, nay, every ſingle Perſon in it, had an equal Right to demand it; and when they, of all others, did leaſt of all deſerve it, as having crucified *the Lord of Life*, continued *obdurate* in their Infidelity ever ſince, and intrenched themſelves in it at firſt by a *falſe* and frivolous Story, which we come now, in the laſt Place, to examine. *His Diſciples came, and ſtole him away.* But were not theſe Diſciples the very Men, who, upon his Apprehenſion in the Garden, all *forſook him*, and *fled?* They durſt not ſtand by him even then, when he declared it in his Power to (*a*) *call for twelve Legions of Angels* to his Reſcue, and have they now the Courage to come in a Body, and bear away his Corpſe? It is incongruous to believe, that they, who durſt not ſo much as appear in publick, but aſſembled privately, and ſhut up their Doors *for Fear of the Jews*, (*b*) ſhould invade a ſtrong Guard, and, all on a Sudden, grow ſo valiant, or rather *fool-hardy*, as to attempt a Detachment of armed Men, when he, in whom they truſted, was dead, and when the ſtouteſt of them all (even when he was alive) trembled at the Voice of a ſilly *Servant Wench*, and did the moſt cowardly Action in the World, that of affirming, nay ſwearing to a Falſhood, to deliver himſelf from the Danger of her inquiſitive Tongue. In their Maſter's Lifetime, their full Perſuaſion was, that he was to become a *temporal* Prince, and, *to ſit on* (*c*) *his right Hand, and on his Left-hand*, had been the Matter of ſome of their Petitions; but now, that they had ſeen him dead, and laid in the Grave, all their Hopes were buried with him, and what the ſorrowful Diſciple, in the Way to *Emmaus*, ſays, was the general Sentiment of them all, (*d*) *we truſted, that it had been he, which ſhould have delivered Iſrael:* And, if ſuch was their melancholy Situation, for what End or Reaſon ſhould they attempt to ſteal away his Body? Could they think that if they had it in their Power, they could raiſe it to Life again? (*e*) If they truſted ſo far to their Maſter's Prediction, as to expect his Reſurrection, (which I think is evident they did not) yet it is too groſs to ſuppoſe, that they were ſo far bereaved of common Senſe, as to fancy, that his Reſurrection depended upon their having the dead Body in their Poſſeſſion: And yet ſome ſuch *extravagant* Suppoſition, as this, muſt be admitted, before we can conceive, why they ſhould run ſuch a viſible Hazard for that, which, when obtained, would avail them nothing. *They came, and ſtole him away.* But *Robberies*, we know, are committed in Haſte, and every Moment is tedious to Men under Apprehenſions of Diſcovery. Had therefore the Diſciples gone upon this Enterprize, evaded the Guards, and carried off the Body privately; yet certainly they would have taken it away, as it was, without ſtaying to *unbind*, or undreſs it. For do *Thieves*, when they have rifled an Houſe, uſe to ſpend Time in putting Things in Order again? And how much more reaſonable is it to ſuppoſe, in the Caſe now before us, that the Diſciples would have been rather ſolicitous to make their *Eſcape*, than to ſtrip the Corpſe, to fold up the Cloaths, and to lay each of them apart in their proper Places? (*f*) The Cuſtom of Interment among the *Jews* was, to roll the dead Body up (as we find our Saviour's was) in *Spices*, which, though they preſerved it in ſome Meaſure, from Corruption, by their glutinous Nature, could not but make the Cloaths, that were uſed with them, cling ſo cloſe to the Skin, as not to be drawn off without a great deal of Time and Difficulty. When therefore theſe *Grave-cloaths* were found regularly pulled off, wrapped up, and laid by, this plainly ſhews, that the removing of the Body was a Work of Leiſure and Deliberation, and ſuch, as by no Means, agrees with the Haſte and Confuſion of Things done by Stealth; nor can it be ſuppoſed, the Perſons, who came upon that Buſineſs, ſhould trifle away their Time in ſuch *hazardous* and unneceſſary *Niceties*.

The Frivolouſneſs of the Soldiers Pretence from ſeveral Circumſtances.

They came by Night; and, taking the Advantage of it, *ſtole away the Body, while we ſlept.* But, as the *Romans* were known to be very ſtrict in their *military* Diſcipline, and a Detachment, upon ſuch Occaſions, as this, generally conſiſted of *fifty* Men, well appointed, and well armed, of what Service to the Diſciples, who knew nothing of the Guards neglecting their Poſt, would the Seaſon of the Night be, when it was

(*a*) Matt. xxvi. 53. (*b*) *Stanhope*'s Ep. and Goſp. Vol. II. (*c*) Matt. xx. 21. (*d*) Luke xxiv. 21.
(*e*) Trial of the Witneſſes. (*f*) *Stanhope*'s Ep. and Goſp. Vol. II.

full Moon, which, in theſe *Eaſtern* Countries, is almoſt as bright, as Noon-Day; and when *Jews* and *Proſelytes* from all Nations, in Number above * two Millions of People, were met together at *Jeruſalem*, to celebrate the *paſchal Feſtival*, too many to be ſure to be received and lodged in the Town, and ſome, conſequently, may be ſuppoſed walking in the Fields, and ready to ſeize any they ſhould find running away with a Corpſe. In theſe Circumſtances, that either the *Diſciples* ſhould be in a Condition to attempt the Removal of their dead Maſter, or the *Soldiers*, or any other adventitious Perſons, in a Diſpoſition to permit them to paſs along without any Moleſtation, is a Thing, that cannot ſo much as be imagined, without ſuppoſing them *all aſleep* at the ſame Time; and if they were ſo aſleep, how they came to know ſo well, by *whom*, at what *Time*, and in what *Manner*, he was removed; and of the whole Tranſaction be able to give as punctual an Account, as if they had been *broad awake*, is the greateſt Wonder of all. *O ye wicked and corrupt Wretches*, (as St. *Auſtin* juſtly expoſtulates the Caſe with the Guard) *either ye were awake, or aſleep: If awake, it was your Buſineſs to ſecure the Body from being ſtollen away; if aſleep, then your Words diſprove you: For granting this, it was impoſſible you ſhould either know, what was done, or who the Perſons were, that did it.*

As well as the future Conduct of the Chief Prieſts and Rulers.

FROM what has been ſaid, it muſt certainly appear, that the Diſciples ſtealing away their Maſter's Body was a forged Story (though very ſenſeleſs and abſurd) invented by the *Chief Prieſts* and *Elders*, and put in the Mouths of the *mercenary* Soldiers, on purpoſe to ſtifle their true Evidence: For that the *Chief Prieſts and Elders* were ſenſible of its being *falſe*, and for that Reaſon never pretended to make a *Proof* of it afterwards, is farther evident from their ſubſequent Behaviour. Not long after our Saviour's Reſurrection, we read, that the Diſciples, having received *new Powers from above*, appeared publickly in *Jeruſalem*, nay, in the very Temple, and, with Boldneſs enough, teſtified the Thing, even before thoſe, that had murdered him. But what did the *Chief Prieſts and Rulers* do upon this Occaſion? They ſeize upon the Apoſtles, they threaten them, they beat them, they ſcourge them, and (*g*) all to ſtop their Mouths, inſiſting that they ſhould ſay no more of the Matter. But why did they not, when they had them in their Power, charge them directly with their *notorious* Cheat in *ſtealing* away their Maſter's Body, and ſo expoſe them to the People, as *Impoſtors*? This had been more to their Purpoſe, and had more effectually undeceived the People, than all their *Menaces* and ill Uſage, but not one Word of this is ſaid. They try to murder them; enter into Combinations to aſſaſſinate them; prevail with *Herod* to put one of them to Death; but not ſo much as a Charge againſt them of any *Fraud* in the Reſurrection: And, in like Manner, (*h*) when they employed their Orator *Tertullus* to plead againſt *Paul*, and gave him, no Doubt, all proper Inſtructions for that Purpoſe, we find him declaiming upon the common *Topicks* of *Sedition*, and *Hereſy*, *profaning the Temple*, and the like, which were mere *Trifles* in Compariſon of the other Accuſation, had there been any Foundation for it. From all which Inſtances we cannot but conclude, that the firſt Raiſers and Abettors of this Story, were conſcious of its Falſhood, and believed nothing of it themſelves, however it might ſerve for the Support of their Authority among the People to have others believe it.

* When *Ceſtius* was ſent Preſident from *Rome*, he is ſaid, one Year, to have numbered the People, which came to *Jeruſalem* to obſerve this Feſtival, and, according to *Joſephus* (de bello Lib. 2.) found the Amount of them to be two *Millions and ſeven hundred thouſand Souls*, all purified, and fit for the legal Eating of the *paſchal* Lamb: God having thus diſpoſed it in his heavenly Wiſdom, that the Tidings of his Son's Reſurrection might, by this Means, fly ſwifter over all the Parts of the *then known* World, and, with more Eaſe, prepare the People for Salvation. *Heylyn* on the Creed.

(*g*) Act. iv. (*h*) Act. xxiv.

The DISSERTATION.

The Truth of the Teſtimony, *and* Hiſtory *of our Lord's Reſurrection.*

The great Importance *of this Article, as it is a* Proof *of our whole Religion.*

THE Reſurrection of *Jeſus*, is, and ever was, the great and fundamental Article of Chriſtianity; that, which the *Author and Finiſher* of it made the Teſt of his divine Miſſion, and the Evidence of his being Chriſt the Son of God; on which all our Hopes and Expectations depend; and with which our whole Religion either ſtands or falls: (*i*) *For if Chriſt be not riſen, then is our Preaching vain, and your Faith is alſo vain.*

(*k*) WHATEVER might be urged from the Goodneſs of his *Doctrine*, the Integrity of his *Life*, and the Multitude of his *Miracles* in Proof of the Truth of the Religion, he hath taught us, had he not riſen from the dead, Men, in all Ages (as the *Phariſees* did of old) might have aſcribed his Miracles to Sorcery or Magick; the Excellency of his Doctrine to a Superiority of Genius; and the Innocency of his Life to a *ſtale* Trick and Artifice more eaſily to impoſe upon the World. But now, when it appears, that the Perſon, who taught this Religion, who did theſe wonderful Works, and who lived this virtuous Life, after he was put to a cruel Death, did riſe again, according to what himſelf had foretold; converſed upon Earth for *forty Days* together; and then, in the Preſence of many Spectators, aſcended viſibly into Heaven; when all this manifeſtly appears, I ſay, there is no Room left for any Suſpicion of this Nature, but all Pretences of *Impoſture* do perfectly vaniſh. We all agree that, without a divine Power, he could not have been raiſed from the dead; but then to ſuppoſe, that God ſhould employ his Power for the Proof of a Falſhood, or ſet *his Seal*, as it were, to the Atteſtation of an impious Lye, and, by that Means, lay an invincible Temptation and Snare before all Mankind to believe it, is what no Man can bring his Mind to, who has any tolerable Notion of the *Exiſtence* of a God, and that he is a true and faithful Being, (*l*) *righteous in all his Ways, and holy in all his Works.* So unexceptionable a Proof, or Demonſtration rather, of our holy Religion is the Reſurrection of Chriſt: But then, as this Reſurrection was a *Matter of Fact*, the Truth of which depends upon the *Veracity* of the *Witneſſes*, that at firſt atteſted it, and the *Authentickneſs* of the *Hiſtory*, wherein the Account of it is tranſmitted to us, it may be very proper here, for the well-grounding and eſtabliſhing our Faith in theſe Particulars, to take an Occaſion to make a ſhort Enquiry into the Character of both.

The firſt Witneſſes hereof were honeſt Men.

As the firſt *Witneſſes* of this great Event had ſufficient Evidence of its Reality, not to be liable themſelves to any Deception in the Caſe; ſo are they repreſented, not as Perſons of a *Temper* and *Diſpoſition* to deviſe a Forgery on Purpoſe to delude and abuſe Mankind. Their *Doctrine* utterly condemned all Malice, and Falſhood, and (*m*) *cunning Craftineſs, whereby Men lay in wait to deceive.* Their *Exhortations* were (*n*) *to do good unto all Men*, and, (*o*) *putting away Lying, every Man to ſpeak Truth with his Neighbour*, and therefore we find them appealing to their own Behaviour, (*p*) *we have renounced the hidden Things of Diſhoneſty, not walking in Craftineſs, nor handling the Word of God deceitfully; but, by Manifeſtation of the Truth, commending ourſelves to every Man's Conſcience in the Sight of God.* Theſe are not the Words and Actions of *Impoſtors*, who had lately invented, and were then earneſtly propagating a vile *Cheat*, for no other End, that we can imagine, than having the ſorry Pleaſure of laughing at every one, whom they could perſuade to believe it.

Not qualified *to carry on a* Cheat, *or to promiſe themſelves* Succeſs *in it.*

BUT how indeed could they pretend to *perſuade* any. (*q*) They were not bred up in *Courts*, or engaged in ſuch a Way of living, wherein the Arts and *Intrigues* of the World were either taught or practiſed. They were no Men of *polite* Converſation, that, by the Helps of *Philoſophy*, and *Eloquence* of Speech, were able to raiſe an Eſteem of themſelves in the reſt of Mankind: but their *Diſcourſes* were plain and homely, as well as their *Education* and Condition in the World; ſuch as could neither prompt their *Ambition*, nor

(*i*) 1 Cor. xv. 14. (*k*) *Sharp*'s Serm. Vol. I. (*l*) Pſalm cxlv. 17. (*m*) Eph. iv. 14.
(*n*) Gal. vi. 10. (*o*) Eph. iv. 25. (*p*) 2 Cor. iv. 2. (*q*) *Ditton* on the Reſurrection.

nor qualify them for great Attempts. They were, in ſhort, poor illiterate *Fiſhermen*, and *Mechanicks*, and therefore not in much likelihood to entertain ſo great a Thought, as putting an *Impoſture* upon the whole World. But admitted they did entertain it, yet what Hopes could they have of carrying it on with Succeſs, (*r*) when all the *Grandees* of the World, both *political* and *religious*, were, in Honour and Intereſt concerned to detect the Cheat, and defeat their Deſigns, when the particular Enemies of their Lord's Reſurrection had ſo many weighty *Reaſons* to prove it falſe, and full *Power* in their Hands to examine ſuch Perſons and Things, as might conduce to the Diſcovery of their Villainy; when they had juſt Grounds to fear that God would *blaſt* their wicked Endeavours to propagate the Belief of a *Lye*, which they profanely dared to father on him, and to vent in his Name; and when they had no Reaſon to hope, that the *Father of Lyes* himſelf, or any of his *Powers of Darkneſs* would be favourable and aſſiſtant to them, ſince the Succeſs of their Doctrine, (whether true or falſe) could not but prove prejudicial to his Kingdom? To bear up againſt all theſe Adverſaries, if they were Confederates in a Cheat, and their Teſtimony, in their own Conſciences, falſe, is ſuch a Degree of Boldneſs, as was never heard of. But, whatever we are pleaſed to think of theſe *Witneſſes*, (*s*) we muſt ſtill conſider them as *Men*, and, conſequently, of the ſame Paſſions and Deſires with other Men; and being ſo, that they ſhould relinquiſh all the darling Pleaſures, Profits, and Accommodations of Life, and voluntarily expoſe themſelves to Scorn, to Impriſonment, to Tortures, and Death itſelf, only to propagate a Story, which they themſelves knew to be a Lye, and that an abſurd, inſipid, incredible Lye (if a Lye at all) is a Thing unnatural, and morally impoſſible.

Their Fooliſhneſs *in undertaking it.*

(*t*) IF we look into the Writings of the Apoſtles, we cannot but acknowledge, that they were Men of ſound Intellects; and yet if they were conſcious, that *Jeſus* was not riſen, and, conſequently, was no better than a wicked *Impoſtor*, how they could, without the Imputation of being mere *Idiots*, (*u*) *rejoice in that they were counted worthy to ſuffer Shame for his Name*; (*x*) *take Pleaſure in Reproaches, in Neceſſities, in Perſecution, in Diſtreſſes for his Sake*; and (*y*) *count all Things but Loſs for the Excellency of Jeſus Chriſt their Lord, for whom they ſuffered the Loſs of all Things*, we cannot poſſibly conceive; nor can we imagine, how they came to be *bewitched* with ſo paſſionate an Affection, and ſo mighty a Reſpect towards a poor, dead Man; who was born obſcurely, lived meanly, and died ignominiouſly; who died as a Malefactor, and that *deſervedly* too, ſuppoſing they knew, that their Teſtimony was falſe; and who could never be in any Condition to thank, or reward them, for all they did, and ſuffered upon his Account, as, merely for his Sake, or rather not for his Sake, but only for a Smoak of vain Opinion, obſtinately to expoſe themſelves to all the Calamities of the World, and all the Damnations of Hell. (*z*) *Who ſhall ſeparate us*, ſays St. *Paul*, *from the Love of Chriſt? ſhall Tribulation, or Diſtreſs, or Perſecution, or Famine, or Nakedneſs, or Peril, or the Sword? nay, in all theſe Things we are more than Conquerors through him that loved us.* But could they, think we, ſpeak at this Rate, who knew *Jeſus* to be a wicked Deceiver, juſtly hated of God and Men? no aſſuredly, their Speech and Behaviour abundantly ſhew, that *therefore* they bore this Zeal and Affection for their Maſter, becauſe, as with their *Mouths* they openly *profeſſed*, ſo in their *Hearts* they were thoroughly *perſuaded*, that he was the Son of God the Saviour of the World; who died for their Sake, who was, to their Knowledge, raiſed again; who alſo, according to his Promiſes, would recompenſe their faithful Adherence to him with an eternal Crown of Bliſs.

And the Incongruity *of ſuppoſing it.*

INSTANCES perhaps there may be found of Perſons, who have ſuffered for *Errors*, as well as Truth, and have given up their Lives in a ſtubborn Defence of *Doctrines* which others as heartily have abhorred. But *Doctrines* and *Facts* are not the ſame: In Doctrines, and Matters of Opinion, Men miſtake perpetually; (*a*) but the Apoſtles Teſtimony of Chriſt's Reſurrection is a Teſtimony concerning a *Fact*, whereof they declared themſelves *Eye-witneſſes*, and it is more than all the Records of Time can

(*r*) *Barrow*, Vol. II. (*s*) *South*'s Ser. Vol. V. (*t*) *Barrow*, Vol. II. (*u*) Acts v. 41.
(*x*) 2 Cor. xii. 10. (*y*) Phil. iii. 8. (*z*) Rom. viii, 35, 37. (*a*) The Trial of the Witneſſes.

can do, to ſhew us one *ſingle Man*, much leſs a great *Number* of ſober and ſerious Men, all chearfully undergoing the moſt violent Deaths, rather than *recant* what they knew to be a direct Falſhood. The Truth is, he, that can believe that Perſons, otherwiſe ſtrictly blameleſs, and rigidly virtuous, neither bereaved of Reaſon, nor deſtitute of common Senſe, ſhould ſo zealouſly labour to maintain a *Lye*, as to expoſe themſelves to the *Fury* of Men, and the *Flames* of Hell for the Sake of it; that they ſhould ſacrifice their Lives and Souls to the *Ghoſt* of a crucified, and reputed *Malefactor*, and that God, who is Truth itſelf, by enabling them to perform miraculous Works, ſhould give Sanction and Teſtimony to Error and Falſhood; he, I ſay, who denies the Reſurrection of Chriſt, and can believe ſuch Abſurdities as theſe, refuſes his Aſſent to the *beſt atteſted* Fact in the World, and yields it to another, which, of all Legends, is the moſt unlikely, and improbable.

(*b*) He muſt believe, that a Company of rude *Mechanicks*, without any Skill or Experience, without any Learning or Diſcipline, without any Arts of pleaſing, or recommending themſelves, were able to put a Deception upon all Mankind, and to lay their *Plot* ſo very deep, that none of all the *penetrating* and inquiſitive Heads in the World, for a Succeſſion of ſo many Centuries, and after the deepeſt *Reſearches* and Examinations, ſhould find it poſſible to diſcover the leaſt Fault or Flaw in the whole Contrivance. He muſt believe, that the chief *Managers* of this Impoſture, after having had Reaſon enough, in the *Treachery* of one, and the *Cowardice* of another of their Company, to ſuſpect one another, did, nevertheleſs, not only combine together themſelves, but took into their Confederacy a large Party of Men, to the Number of *five hundred* and upwards, and yet the Confederacy was ſo kept, that neither Promiſes, nor Threats, neither the Prevalence of Truth, nor Force of Conſcience, nor Terrors of Death ever prevailed with one of them to turn Informer, and diſcover the Cheat.

He muſt believe, that theſe Men, *cunning* and confederate as they were, had, nevertheleſs, diveſted themſelves of all the *Principles* of Self-Love and Tenderneſs, of Care and Regard to their own Preſervation; deſpiſed all the Comforts and Enjoyments of Life, and voluntarily embraced Poverty and Miſery, Shame and Obloquy, Torments and Death, and Damnation itſelf, and all for nothing, for no end or Purpoſe, that can be imagined, except to ſupport an *abominable* Lye. He muſt believe, that theſe *Cheats* and *Impoſtors*, as vile and wicked, as ſilly and ſenſeleſs as they were, did, nevertheleſs, furniſh Mankind with the moſt exact *Syſtem* of *Morality*, that ever was, and taught ſuch *Rules* of holy Living, as were never to be expected from all the Schools of *Philoſophy*; that they, whoſe Purpoſe it was to *abuſe* the World, lay the ſureſt Foundations of Peace and Happineſs; they, who were notorious *Hypocrites*, took indefatigable Pains to make others ſincere and upright; and that they, who themſelves believed nothing of a God, did impart the moſt rational and becoming *Notions* of him; and, by no other Principles, than thoſe of *Atheiſm*, and *Irreligion*, kindled in the Hearts of Men an earneſt Deſire to ſerve and obey, to worſhip and adore him. But theſe are Abſurdities a little too groſs; and yet ſwallow them he muſt, who diſbelieves the Apoſtles *Veracity* in their Atteſtation of our Lord's Reſurrection.

Such effectual Care has the *Providence* of God taken, in the moſt convincing Manner, to aſcertain the *Teſtimony* of this great Point: and to make that Teſtimony permanent, and of general Uſe, nothing more ſeemed to be required, than to have it committed to *authentick* Records (ſuch we call the Hiſtory of the *Goſpel)* that there it might abide for all ſucceeding Ages to inſpect and examine: let us then, in the next Place ſee, what the ſame good Providence has done for us in this Reſpect.

The Evangeliſts, *their Character, and when they wrote.*

The Reſurrection of Chriſt was an *Event* of too great Moment to be truſted to the Uncertainty of an *oral Tradition*, and therefore the Wiſdom of God took care to have it recorded very faithfully, and very minutely, by certain approved *Hiſtorians*, who being Men of *Integrity*, and ſufficiently inſtructed in the Subject they were to handle; Men of *Underſtanding*, and competent to diſtinguiſh between real Facts and Appearances; Men of *Simplicity*, who affected no Eloquence in order to diſguiſe the Truth; and Men of *Freedom* and Impartiality, who, having no corrupt Intereſt

(*b*) *Ditton* on the Reſurrection.

or private Ends to ſerve, were every Way qualified for ſuch an Undertaking. Of theſe two were *Apoſtles*, the conſtant Companions of *Jeſus*, and one of them his chief *Favourite*, that uſed to be admitted to all his Privacies while he was on Earth: (*c*) The other two were *Diſciples*, *Mark*, the Companion of St. *Peter*, and *Luke*, the Attendant on St. *Paul*, from whom they received full Inſtructions, and, very probably, exact Corrections in their Hiſtories. Their Ambition however was not to make themſelves known to the World by their Writings, but purely to promote the *Propagation* of the Chriſtian Faith; and, accordingly, the beſt Account we have from Antiquity, is, that St. *Matthew* wrote his Goſpel about *eight*, St. *Mark*, about *ten*, St. *Luke*, within *fifteen*, and St. *John*, not much above two and thirty Years after our Saviour's Aſcenſion, leſt any Thing, deſerving the Notice, or neceſſary to the Salvation of Poſterity, might eſcape their Memories, by Reaſon of too long a Delay.

The Goſpel owned, even by Enemies, to be the ſame they ever were.

THESE are the Books, which we have in our preſent Poſſeſſion: and, that they are the *ſame* which theſe Hiſtorians, at that Time, endited, not only * the Writers of the next Age, and every Age ſince have aſſerted, and by numerous Paſſages, referred to, and recited from them, do evince; but the greateſt Enemies, both *Jews* and *Heathens*, in their Tracts againſt *Chriſtianity*, have acknowledged; and yet it is a known Truth, that *Celſus*, *Porphyry*, and *Julian* the Apoſtate were too violently bent againſt it, to omit any Method of Argumentation, that would diſtreſs it, and had too much *Sagacity* not to perceive, that nothing could affect it more, than to render its principal *Writers* of doubtful Credit and Authority. But ſince we never once find them making the leaſt Attempt that Way, this is a ſtrong Preſumption, that they knew the Thing was utterly impracticable. (*d*) Nay, ſince we find the laſt of theſe *antichriſtian* Writers, (and on many Accounts the moſt conſiderable of them,) giving poſitive Evidence in Favour of the *four Goſpels*, and admitting them to be written by the very Perſons, to whom they have all along been very juſtly aſcribed; this muſt be allowed to be a Proof of their *Genuineneſs* beyond the Power of all Exception or Contradiction. In ſo long a *Tract* of Time, and through the Negligence of *Tranſcribers*, it may well be expected, that ſome ſmall *Variations* ſhould creep into ſuch a Multitude of Copies: That the *Contents* however of the Books themſelves, in their *Deſcent* to us, have not ſuffered any conſiderable *Alteration*, but, from the Days of the Apoſtles, even to this preſent Age, have always been the *ſame*, the long *Continuance* of the *original* Copies in the Church, the many *Tranſcripts* upon all Occaſions taken from them, and their early *Tranſlations* into the Languages of moſt Nations, have, under the Providence of God, been the Means of their Preſervation.

The Marks of their being truly wrote.

SINCE then we have in our Hands *authentick* Records of our Lord's Reſurrection, let us look a little into them, and ſee whether they have not the proper *Marks* and Characters of true Hiſtorians. They affix their *Names* to their Writings, as being not afraid or aſhamed to own them; and, without any Art or *Sophiſtry*, deliver naked Facts with the utmoſt Plainneſs and Simplicity. In their *Narrations* they make Uſe of no Flouriſhes of *Rhetorick*, nor any (*e*) *Excellency of Speech or Wiſdom*, to deceive unwary Readers. The *Things*, that they mention, were done in a *Country*, where the Scene of their Hiſtory is laid; at a *Time*, when the Fame of them was in every Body's Mouth and Memory; and among *Perſons*, both capable and deſirous to detect them in any Fallacy. They name ſeveral Perſons of different Ranks and Characters, that were concerned in theſe Tranſactions; are not afraid to lay the

* That St. *Matthew* and St. *Mark* were the Authors of the *Goſpels*, that go under their Names, we learn from *Papias*, who flouriſhed within *fifty* Years after thoſe Goſpels came abroad, and who lived in the *Apoſtolick* Age itſelf. A little later than the middle of the ſecond Age, and within about *one hundred* Years after the earlieſt of theſe Goſpels, lived *Irenæus*, who firſt cites the four Goſpels by Name. He had been inſtructed by *Polycarp*, who had converſed with St. *John*; ſo that his Evidence for the *Genuineneſs* of the four Goſpels may, in like Manner, be reſolved into the *apoſtolick* Age; and (what is remarkable in theſe eminent and early Fathers) they do, in the ſtrongeſt Manner, appeal not to their *Predeceſſors* ſingly, but to the *Tradition* of all Churches (even thoſe, that were Apoſtolick Sees) that the four Goſpels, under their preſent *Titles*, were with the Church *a primordio*, i. e. from the Beginning, or from their firſt Publication. *Twells*'s Ser. at *Boyle*'s Lect.

(*c*) *Whitby*'s Preface to St. *Luke*. (*d*) *Twells*'s Ser. (*e*) 1 Cor. ii. 1.

the Blame upon thoſe in the higheſt Authority, nor aſhamed to relate their own Faults and Infirmities, as well as the cruel and ignominious Death of their great Lord and Maſter. In ſhort, they write like Men, that were uninfluenced either by Hope or Fear, and made *Truth* their only Aim, whether it made for them or againſt them. In the particular Articles of their Lord's Paſſion and Reſurrection, taking them all together, they are very exact and circumſtantial, but here they have the Happineſs to be *ſeconded* by other Authors, who were either *Strangers*, or no *Well-wiſhers* to Chriſtianity: For the *Death* of Chriſt, and the Manner of his Suffering under *Pontius Pilate* is related by *Tacitus*, and *Lucian*; the *univerſal Darkneſs*, which happened at that Time, by *Dionyſius*, before he was a Convert; the dreadful *Earthquake*, which was at the ſame Time, is mentioned by *Dion*, *Pliny*, and *Suetonius*; The *rending of the Veil* by the *Jewiſh* Hiſtorian *Joſephus*; and the Miracle of the Reſurrection itſelf is reported in the * *Memoirs* of *Pilate* ſent to the Emperor *Tiberius*, for the Truth of which we find *Tertullian*, in his *Apology*, about two hundred Years after, appealing to the publick Archives at *Rome*. Now putting all this together, that the *Evangeliſts* were *honeſt* and undeſigning Men, recording Things *plainly*, and without any artful Inſinuations, and ſo *free* and impartial in their Accounts, as not to reſpect the Perſons of Men, neither concealing their own Faults, nor their Maſter's Sufferings; that they had ſufficient Means of *Information* in what they were to record, and no viſible *Intereſt*, in the leaſt, to ſway them againſt their Knowledge; that they ventured to publiſh their Goſpels in a ſhort Time after their Lord's Aſcenſion, though they knew that Perſecution and Death itſelf might be the Conſequence of ſo doing; that their Goſpels, when made publick, appeared to be ſo *conſiſtent* and uniform, and built upon that firm Foundation of Truth, as not to be liable to any juſt Exceptions of their keeneſt Adverſaries; and that, in the particular Articles of their Maſter's *Crucifixion* and *Reſurrection*, theſe very Adverſaries, both *Jews* and *Heathens*, have, in their own Writings, confirmed the Authority of their Narrations; it muſt needs follow, that, according to the genuine Marks of a true Hiſtorian, we have greater Security, than any *human* Hiſtory can pretend to, of the Faithfulneſs of the *Evangeliſts*, and of the Certainty of every Thing contained in their Writings; that Perſons, ſituated in Circumſtances, even conſidered as *common* Hiſtorians, *would not* have deluded us with a falſe Repreſentation of Things: but then, conſidered in the Capacity of *inſpired* Hiſtorians (which Chriſtians, in all Ages, have eſteemed them) they *could not* (without making God *acceſſary* to the Fraud) have bantered our Credulity, and impoſed upon us falſe and *romantick* Fables: and, conſequently, that the many *Faults* and *Abſurdities*, complained of by ſome, cannot be in the *Writings* themſelves, but are too probably in the *Hearts* of the Complainers; for *if our Goſpel*, the Truth and Excellency of our Goſpel, *be hid*, ſays the Apoſtle, *it is hid to them, that are loſt, in whom the God of this World have blinded the Minds of them, that believe not, leſt the Light of the glorious Goſpel of Chriſt (who is the Image of God) ſhould ſhine unto them.*

" THUS

* In the *Roman* Conſtitution, it was cuſtomary for the *Preſidents* of each Province to ſend to the Emperor at *Rome Information* of whatever happened remarkable, during the Time of their Government. Now the Miracles, Death, and Reſurrection of our Saviour Chriſt being Events of an extraordinary Nature, *Pontius Pilate* was obliged to remit an Account thereof to the Emperor *Tiberius*, who thereupon propoſed it to the *Senate* to have him taken into the Number of their Gods, and made it puniſhable to accuſe any Man for being a Chriſtian. This Information of *Pilate*, was entered upon Record at *Rome*; To which *Juſtin Martyr* appeals in his *Apology* to the Emperor *Antoninus Pius*, and the *Senate*, and *Tertullian* in his *Apology*, which was likewiſe preſented to the Senate of *Rome*, or, at leaſt, to the Governors of the Provinces. Now had theſe Appeals been to Records, that were not, at that Time, exiſting, the *Roman* Government would never have ſuffered them to paſs (as they plainly did) without Contradiction. Indeed it would be hard to ſay, which of the two *Suppoſitions* would be moſt abſurd, *viz.* that the two *Apologies* ſhould expoſe the Chriſtian Cauſe, by appealing to a Writing in the Hands of its Enemies, that never had any being, or that they, in ſuch a Caſe, ſhould be ſo far wanting to themſelves, as not to produce the genuine *Acts of Pilate*, and confront the Aſſurance of the *Apologiſts*, had ſuch a Thing been in their Power: and yet, unleſs both theſe Abſurdities happened, the *Acts of Pilate* muſt remain an Evidence for ever, that our Saviour both ſuffered, and roſe again from the dead, in the Manner, that the *Evangeliſts* repreſent him. *Jenkin*'s Reaſonableneſs, Vol. I. and *Twells*'s Ser. at *Boyle*'s Lect. Vol. I.

The Recapitulation, *and uses of the whole.*

"THUS much for the Expoſition of the "*fifth* Article of the Creed, *the third Day* "*he roſe again from the dead*, wherein we "profeſs moſt firmly to believe, that, ac- "cording to the Predictions concerning the "promiſed *Meſſias*, our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, "the ſame Perſon, who was *crucified*, *dead*, "*and buried*, did not long continue in a "State of Death, but, on the *third Day*, "ſtrictly ſpeaking, or in *three Days and* "*three Nights*, in a figurative Senſe, did, "in Virtue of his own Power, as he was the "Son of God, reſtore himſelf to Life again "by ordering his *human* Soul, then ſepa- "rated from his Body, which was lying "in the Grave, to return to it; to re-en- "ter, and re-unite itſelf with it, and ſo, "by putting its *vital* Functions into their "former Motion and Vigour, to become "the very ſame Man he was before his "Death, as, by all the Proofs imaginable, "in forty Days converſe with his Apoſtles "and Diſciples, he gave Evidence, ſuffi- "cient, not only to *eſtabliſh* their Faith, "but that of all ſucceeding Generations, "who, without the like *ocular Demonſtra-* "*tion*, ſhould be induced, by their Teſti- "mony, to believe the Reality of his Re- "ſurrection; by the Power of which im- "portant Article we are aſſured of the *di-* "*vine*, as well as *human* Nature of Chriſt "our Lord; of his being the *Meſſias*, ſent "from Heaven, and *(f) declared to be the* "*Son of God*; of the Truth of the Religi- "on, he taught us, which himſelf ſealed "with his Blood, and God *thus* fully ratifi- "fied; of the Honour and Glory of pro- "feſſing it, ſince the *Scandal* of the Croſs "is by this Means quite removed; of the "ample Satisfaction he has made to the di- "vine Juſtice for the Offences of all Man- "kind; of his Appointment to a meriato- "rial Kingdom, (*g*) *and to be the Lord*, "*both of the Dead and of the Living*; of "the *Certainty* of our own Reſurrection "likewiſe, in him, who, in our Nature, "was (*h*) *the firſt born from the dead*; of "the Immortality of our Souls, and their "Deſignation to eternal Life and Happi- "neſs (*i*) *in our Forerunner*, who *is entered* "*into Heaven for us*; and the proper Ef- "fect of all this ſhould be, *to ſeek thoſe* "*Things which are above*; To raiſe our "Minds beyond all preſent Enjoyments; to "ſupport them with Patience under all the "Difficulties of this Life; and to comfort "them on all Occaſions, with a joyful Ex- "pectation of a better; and therefore, *bleſſ-* "*ed (k) be the God, and Father of our* "*Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who, according to* "*his abundant Mercy, hath begotten us* "*again unto a lively Hope, by the Reſur-* "*rection of Jeſus Chriſt from the dead.*"

(*f*) Rom. i. 4. (*g*) Rom. xiv. 9. (*h*) Col. i. 18. (*i*) Heb. vi. 20. (*k*) 1 Pet. i. 3.

CHAP.

CHAP. VI. SECT. I.

ARTICLE VI.

*He aſcended into Heaven, and ſitteth on the right Hand of God the Father Almighty.

The EXPOSITION.

AFTER our Lord's *Reſurrection* from the Dead, the *Creed* takes no Notice how long he *continued* upon Earth, how often he *appeared* to his Diſciples, or in what Manner he *converſed* with them (for theſe Things it refers us to the Goſpel-Hiſtory) but immediately proceeds to the other Steps of his Exaltation, *his Aſcent into Heaven, and Seſſion at God's right Hand:* But before we come to the *Proof* and Illuſtration of *this Article*, it may not be improper to explain the *Terms*, in which it is conceived.

The Explanation of the Terms of this Article.

Now, when the *Creed* aſſerts, that our bleſſed *Lord aſcended into Heaven*, it muſt be ſuppoſed to refer to his *human* Nature only; for, as the *divine* Nature fills all Places both in Heaven and Earth, is every where at once and every where alike, it is not capable of what we call *local Motion*, and, conſequently, cannot, with any Manner of Propriety, be ſaid to remove from Earth to Heaven. Since then the Paſſages in Scripture, which mention this Matter, do manifeſtly mean, that he *ceaſed* to be in a Place, where he was before, and *began* to be in a Place, where he was not before; that he *remained* no longer on Earth, where he had been for ſome Time, and *removed* into Heaven, where, as to his Humanity, he had never been: It muſt neceſſarily follow, that they cannot be underſtood of that Nature of Chriſt, which is *infinite*, and *omnipreſent*, but of that only, which is finite, and whoſe Property it is to be ſo confined to one Place, as not, at the ſame Time, to continue in another.

THE Word *Heaven* admits of various Senſes in the ſacred Language, and the Place itſelf is diſtinguiſhed into different Regions; but, when we read, that our Saviour Chriſt did not *only* (*a*) *enter into the holy Place*, but (*b*) *paſſed through the Heavens*, was (*c*) *made higher than the Heavens*, and (*d*) *aſcended up far above all Heavens*, &c. we cannot but conclude, that, in his human Nature, he was carried

* The Author of *the Hiſtory of the Apoſtles Creed* is of Opinion, that the *Article*, concerning the *Aſcenſion of* Chriſt, was added to the Creed, in the *ſecond* Century, againſt *Apelles*, a Diſciple of *Marcion*, who, (as *Tertullian*, in his Book of *Preſcription* &c. writes) *did not affirm, with* Marcion, *that the Body of Chriſt was only a Phantom, but that, when he came down from Heaven, he made himſelf a ſiderial or aerial Body, which, at his Aſcenſion, he reſtored to the ſeveral Elements, from whence he had taken it, and, having thus diſperſed every Part of his Body, that his Spirit only was received into Heaven.* In like Manner he ſuppoſes, that the Word *Heaven* was inſerted, in *Contradiction* to a fooliſh Conceit of an ancient *Heretick* called *Hermogenes*, who, (according to the Relation of *Theodoret*) affirmed, *that the Body of our Lord was placed in the Sun*, from the *Septuagint's* Miſ-tranſlation of a Paſſage in the *Pſalmiſt*, Pſ. xix. 4. *In the Sun hath he ſet his Tabernacle*, which ſhould be rendered, *in them he hath ſet a Tabernacle for the Sun*; and from this wrong *Tranſlation* he concluded, that our Saviour's Body, after his Reſurrection, was conveyed to the *Sphere* of the Sun, where it was to continue till his *ſecond* coming. But againſt all this it is argued, that, had the *Compilers* of the Creed advanced this *Article* againſt the Error of *Apelles*, they would not barely have ſaid, *he aſcended into Heaven*, but they would have affirmed *the Aſſumption of his Fleſh*, or corporeal Part *into Heaven*; or that, had they levelled it againſt the Conceit of *Hermogenes*, they would have ſaid, that he aſcended, *with his Body, above the Heaven*, above every Star. Since there we find our Saviour acquainting the People with his Intention of *aſcending, where he was before*, John vi. 62. and St. *Peter*, in his *catechetical* Diſcourſes, both to the *Jews* and *Gentiles*, making Mention of the *Aſcenſion* of Chriſt into Heaven, or his *Exaltation to the right Hand* of God, to rule *over all Things*, and at laſt to be Judge both of *the living and the dead*, Acts ii. 33, 36. and x. 42. there is Reaſon to believe, that this Article was in the Creed from the *very firſt*, and that all *Converts*, when baptized, were obliged to make Confeſſion of it. *King's* Hiſt. of the Creed, and *Grabe's* Notes on Bp. *Bull's* Judgment &c.

(*a*) Heb. ix. 12. (*b*) iv. 14. (*c*) vi. 26. (*d*) Eph. iv. 10.

to the moſt elevated Part of Heaven, the Place, where God is accuſtomed to diſcover the moſt glorious Effects of his immediate Preſence. So that, (*e*) "whatever "*Heaven* is higher, than the reſt, which "is called *Heavens*; whatever *Sanctuary* "is holier, than all the reſt, which is call-"ed *Holies*; whatever Place is of greateſt "Dignity in all the *Courts* above, into that "Place did Chriſt aſcend, where, in the "Splendor of his *Deity*, he was before "he took upon him our Humanity."

As the *Hand* is the chief Inſtrument of exerting our Strength, it is therefore, in Condeſcenſion to our Capacity, frequently ſet to ſignify the *Power* of God; as the *right Hand*, among Men, is the uſual Place of Honour and Reſpect: It therefore imports, when applied to God, the higheſt *Dignity* and Renown, that he can poſſibly confer on any; and as *ſetting*, in its figurative Senſes, denotes ſometimes a *Ceſſation* from Labour and Toil, and a profound *Reſt* and Tranquillity thereupon; ſometimes an *Habitation*, Permanſion, or Continuance in the one Place, and ſometimes an *Emblem* of *Authority* and Dominion, for which Reaſon *Kings* are repreſented in this Poſture on their Thrones; whenever Chriſt is deſcribed, as *ſitting*, or *being ſet on the right Hand of God*, it muſt be ſuppoſed to ſignify his Enjoyment of perfect Repoſe and Happineſs now, after the many Trials and Sufferings undergone in his Advancement to the higheſt Degree of *Honour* and *Dignity*; his Continuance, and conſtant Abode in the Regions of *Bliſs and Glory*; his Admittance to the Exerciſe of ſupreme *Power* and *Authority*, and his Inveſtiture to a *Kingdom* (*f*) *far above all Principality, and Power, and Might, and Dominion, and every Name, that is named, not only in this World, but alſo in that which is to come.*

And for this Reaſon I ſuppoſe it is, that the Expreſſion of *Father Almighty* is added to this *Clauſe* of the Article: For, though the Term *Almighty* occurs in the Beginning of the Creed, yet is it there a *different* Word, in the *Original*, from what it is here. (*g*) In the *firſt* Article, it ſignifies God's *ſupreme* and univerſal Dominion, as Governor of the World; but here, in the *ſixth*, it properly denotes the *Efficacy*, and Irreſiſtibleneſs of his *Power* and Operation, viz. that he is able to *do*, and to diſpoſe of all Things, without any Controul or Hindrance, as he himſelf pleaſes, according to the *Counſel of his Will*. So that this *Attribute* ſeems to be ſuperadded to the Perſon of the Father, on purpoſe to confirm us in the Belief of his Son's *ſitting at his right* Hand, or of his *univerſal* Diſpoſal and Government of all Things in the Execution of his *legal* Office, as *Mediator*, becauſe the *Father*, who has admitted him to that Place of Dignity and Dominion, is *almighty*, or of infinite Force and Efficacy, whom no Creature can reſiſt. For, if Chriſt's Seſſion *at the right Hand of God* denotes a *Participation* of the divine Power, then, by profeſſing that God's Power is *almighty*, by neceſſary Implication we profeſs that Chriſt's Power is likewiſe *almighty*, (*h*) or that *doing all Things according to his Will, in the Army of Heaven, and among the Inhabitants of the Earth.* Thus much for the *Explication* of the Terms, and we come now to the *Proof* and Illuſtration of the Article itſelf.

That the Meſſias *ſhould be exalted on high*, typified,

That the promiſed *Meſſias*, whenever he made his Appearance, after having ſubmitted to a Life of Perſecution, and a Death of Infamy, was, in a ſhort Time, to be raiſed again from the Grave, received into Heaven, and there admitted into a State of great Honour and Dignity, great Power and Authority, is what we find both *typically* prefigured, and *prophetically* foretold in the holy Scriptures. The Condition of the Patriarch *Iſaac*, who was *intentionally* ſlain by his Father, but (*i*) received again from *Death in a Parable*, and afterwards (*k*) ſettled in a proſperous State of Life; the Advancement of *Joſeph*, from the ſad Confinement of a *Dungeon*, to (*l*) the chief Authority *over the King's Houſe, and over all the Land of Egypt*; the Actions of *Joſhua*, in conquering the Enemies of the People of God, and, as their *Captain*, and Leader, taking Poſſeſſion of the *promiſed Land*; and the Depreſſions of *David*, which ended, at laſt, in an happy Reſtoration from them, unto a mighty Height of *royal* Splendor and Proſperity: Theſe, in their ſeveral Kinds, may be deemed no improper *Types* of our Lord's Aſcenſion and Glorification; but what has the neareſt Reſemblance, and is therefore not a little remarked by the Author to the *Hebrews*, is the Office of the *High Prieſt* under

(*e*) *Pearſon* on the Creed. (*f*) Eph. i. 21. (*g*) *King*'s Hiſt. of the Creed. (*h*) Dan. iv. 35. (*i*) Heb. xi. 19. (*k*) Gen. xxvi. 12, &c. (*l*) Gen. xli. 40, 41.

under the Levitical Diſpenſation. For, * as the *Tabernacle* was underſtood by the *Jews* to ſignify this World, and the *Holy of Holies* the ſupreme Heaven, the Seat and Habitation of God; ſo the High Prieſt's paſſing through the reſt of the Tabernacle, and, with the Blood of the Sacrifice, entering into the *Holy of Holies* prefigured Chriſt's Tranſlation, after his Death, through the Regions of the Air, and the ſeveral intermediate Heavens, to the Heaven of Heavens; for (*m*) *Chriſt being become*, ſays the Apoſtle, *an High Prieſt of good Things to come, by a greater and more perfect Tabernacle, not made with Hands, that is to ſay, not of this Building, neither by the Blood of Goats and Calves, but by his own Blood, he entered in once into the holy Place, having obtained eternal Redemption for us.*

And foretold. AND as the Exaltation of the *Meſſias* was in this Manner *prefigured*, ſo was it all along revealed by the Oracles of God in plain and repeated *Predictions*. Holy *David*, by the Spirit of Propheſy, wherewith he was endued, foreſeeing his Son, and yet his *Lord* too, breaking looſe from the Grave, triumphantly riding on the Clouds, returning to his native Habitation, and gloriouſly ſeated at his Father's right Hand, ſpeaks of all, as if it were already done; (*n*) *thou haſt* † *aſcended on high, thou haſt led Captivity captive, thou haſt received Gifts for Men.* The Words ſeem to allude to the Pomp of ancient *Triumphs*, upon the Conqueſt of any powerful Enemy, when the *General*, arrayed in ſplendid Attire, with a *Garland*, or Crown upon his Head, with the *Senators*, and chief Magiſtrates attending him, entered the *imperial* City, in a rich and open Chariot; the military *Spoils* going before, the victorious *Soldiers* following after, and the miſerable *Captives*, whether Kings or others, bringing up the Rear, while the triumphant General, as he moves along, beſtows his Largeſſes, and throws Handfuls of Money among the Populace. Under this View the *Royal* Prophet conſidering our Lord's Aſcenſion, ſeems to attend him through theſe lower Regions of the Air, and, as he advanced to the higheſt Heavens, in an holy and extatick Rapture may be thought (*o*) to cry out, ‡ *lift up your Heads, O ye Gates, and be ye lift up, ye everlaſting Doors, that the King of Glory may come in*; and, when he was entered in, ſeems to have heard the very Words, in which the eternal Father addreſſed him at his Arrival, (*p*) *ſit thou on my right Hand until I have made thine Enemies thy Footſtool*; whilſt another, in the ſame Spirit of Prophecy, repreſents himſelf as an *Eye-witneſs* of this Interview, (*q*) *I ſaw in the Night Viſions, (ſays he,) one like the Son of Man, who came in the Clouds of Heaven, and came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought him near before him, and there was given him Dominion, and Glory, and a Kingdom*, that *all Nations, People, and Languages ſhould ſerve him.*

Our Saviour's notifying *his Aſcenſion.* AND as it was foretold of the great Prophet, who was to come, that, after he had finiſhed his Courſe of Suffering, he ſhould receive

* To this purpoſe ſeveral *Jewiſh* Authors inform us, that *the Tabernacle was a Specimen, or Repreſentation of the Creation of the Univerſe*, and that the *three* Parts of the *Sanctuary* anſwered to the three Worlds. "The "*World of Angels*, ſay they, is repreſented by the *Holy of Holies*, the *heavenly Orbs*, by that Part, where the "Shrew-Bread and Candleſtick were; and the *lower World*, by the open Court, which had *Earth*, and *Air* "and *Fire*, and *Water* in it, the proper Elements of this lower World." Particularly *Joſephus*, who lived in the Apoſtles Time, and was himſelf a *Prieſt*, and very well verſed in *Jewiſh* Affairs, tells us, that, as for *two Parts* of the *Tabernacle*, they were left *common* to all the Prieſts, and theſe (*ſaith he*) *repreſent the Earth, and the Sea, which are common for all Men*, but then the *third Part* is aſſigned to God, *becauſe Men may not enter into that holy Place, where God dwelleth*; where he plainly makes the *Holy of Holies* a Figure of Heaven itſelf, as the divine Author of the Epiſtle to the *Hebrews* does. *Kidder*'s Meſſias Part 1.

† This *Text* indeed may be ſo explained, as to ſignify *David*'s triumphant Aſcent to the Hill, where the Temple ſtood, after his Conqueſt over the *Philiſtines*; but, as the Word *on high* is an ordinary Expreſſion in the Royal Pſalmiſt to denote *Heaven*, Pſ. xviii. 17.—xciii. 4.—cii. 20, &c. it is only to be explained ſo by Way of *Accommodation*, and in a *ſecondary* Senſe; for *Beza* obſerves, that, by the Confeſſion of the moſt moderate and unprejudiced *Jews*, the *Application* of it, according to St. *Paul*, Eph. iv. 8. is ſo ſtrictly juſt, that all other Applications are to be looked upon as *figurative* and improper. *Fidders*'s Body Vol. I.

‡ Theſe Words, in their *firſt* and more *literal* Senſe, may relate perhaps to the *Entrance* of the Ark into the Tabernacle, which *David* had erected for it, when he brought it from the Houſe of *Obed-Edom* with great Rejoicing, 2 Sam. vi. 12. But in their *proper*, and more elevated Senſe, they certainly denote our Lord's Entrance into Heaven, for as much as he is called the *Lord of Hoſts*, and the *Lord of Glory*, which cannot be denominated of any *mortal Man*, nor can the *Gate* of the Tabernacle, with any Propriety of Speech, be called *the everlaſting Doors*. *Barrow* on the Creed Vol. II.

(*m*) Heb. ix. 11, 12. (*n*) Pſal. lxviii. 18. (*o*) Pſal. xxiv. 7. (*p*) Pſal. cx. 1. (*q*) Dan. vii. 13, &c.

receive an ample Reward for his Humiliation; ſo our bleſſed Saviour, to juſtify his Title to that Character, made frequent Declarations of his intended Aſcenſion into Heaven. For, when we find him propounding this Queſtion to the Multitude, (*r*) *What, and if ye ſhall ſee the Son of Man aſcending up where he was before?* Thus admoniſhing his Diſciples, (*s*) *if ye loved me, ye would rejoice, becauſe I ſaid I go unto my Father,—and now I have told you before it come to paſs, that when it is come to paſs, ye might believe*; and thus anſwering the *High-prieſt*, upon his *adjuring* him to tell him the Truth, (*t*) *hereafter ſhall ye ſee the Son of Man ſitting on the right Hand of Power, and coming in the Clouds of Heaven*, he plainly declares his Aſſurance of ſuch an Exaltation, and ſtakes, as it were, the whole *Weight* of his Cauſe upon it: and therefore, after his Reſurrection, we find him perſiſting ſtill in his Intention, forewarning his Diſciples Day by Day, and making Preparation for his Departure.

The Scriptures Account,

AFTER his Reſurrection indeed, it could not be ſuppoſed, that he would always continue in this lower World; and, if he was to depart, it is reaſonable to conclude, that he would return to the Place, from whence he came. When therefore he had finiſhed all that was requiſite for him to do upon Earth, for the Confirmation of our Faith, and the Conſtitution of his Church; when he had converſed with his Diſciples a competent Time, and given them the fulleſt Satisfaction, with Reſpect to the Truth and Reality of his Reſurrection; *corrected* their fond Miſtakes concerning him, and his Kingdom, *inſtructed* them in the great Affair, they were to execute; *comforted* their Hearts againſt the Tribulations, they were to meet with; *endued* them with the Power of Working *Miracles*, in Confirmation of their Doctrine, and *aſſured* them, that, in a ſhort Time, he would ſend *his holy Spirit to be ever with them*, to aſſiſt, and enable them to diſcharge the Office unto which he had appointed them; when he had done all this, I ſay, *he led them out as far as* Bethany, to the Mount of Olives, and, (*u*) *while he was lifting up his Hands, and bleſſing them, he was parted from them, and carried up into Heaven, until a Cloud received them out of their Sight.*

And Reality of it.

IT is a juſt Obſervation of one of (*x*) the Ancients, that, though the Apoſtles were not permitted to ſee our Lord in the Act of his riſing from the dead, yet were they allowed to be preſent with him, and *ſtedfaſtly to behold* him at the Time of his Aſcenſion into Heaven; and the Reaſon hereof he gives us, *viz.* becauſe their Teſtimony was requiſite to eſtabliſh our Faith in the one Caſe, but not in the other. It was not neceſſary, that they ſhould ſee, when he broke looſe from the Grave, becauſe their knowing him ſo well before, and ſeeing and converſing with him ſo frequently afterwards, was a ſufficient Demonſtration of his Reſurrection: But, as they were not to behold him, when he entered the Gates of Heaven, nor be Eye-witneſſes of his *Seſſion* at *God's right Hand*; it was highly requiſite, not only that they ſhould be admitted to a Sight of his Aſcenſion, which led thereunto, but have the other Part likewiſe of his Exaltation atteſted to them by the very Inhabitants of the Place, who were queſtionleſs ſent from thence upon this Errand, and ſaid, (*y*) *ye Men of Galilee, why ſtand ye gazing up into Heaven? This ſame Jeſus, who is taken up from you into Heaven, ſhall ſo come in like Manner, as you have ſeen him go into Heaven.*

(*z*) THUS have we the Teſtimony of Angels, as well as Men, that our Saviour was *locally* tranſlated from Earth to Heaven; he was ſeen by the one, when taken from the Earth, and by the other, when entering into Heaven. His Diſciples were Eye-witneſſes of the *firſt Stage* of his Aſcenſion, and the Angels of the laſt, if not of his whole *Paſſage*, through which we have great Reaſon to conclude they were appointed to attend him. And that this Report of the Angels was true, and the Diſciples, who heard it, under no Deception, was, in a few Days after, made manifeſt by real and ſenſible Effects, when, according to their Lord's gracious and divine Promiſe, by a viſible Deſcent of the *Holy Ghoſt*, they were adorned with uncommon and miraculous *Gifts*, and inveſted with ſuch *Powers* and Faculties, as could only be communicated by him, who

(*r*) John vi. 62. (*s*) John xiv. 28, 29. (*t*) Matt. xxvi. 64. (*u*) Luke xxiv. 50, 51. (*x*) *Chryſ. Hom.* 2. on the Acts. (*y*) Acts i. 11. (*z*) *Snape's* Ser. Vol. II.

The meaning of Chriſt's Seſſion,

who was now *ſitting at the right Hand of God.* * *Sitting at the right Hand of God*, is (*a*) a *figurative* Alluſion to a ſecular *Monarch*, ſeated on high, with his Nobles, and Perſons of the firſt Rank, his Relations, and chief Favourites, his great Officers, and Miniſters of State attending upon him, and ſurrounding his *Throne*, but ſo, as to have ſome Place, more eminent and honourable than the reſt, aſſigned to him, for whom the King intends to declare his more eſpecial Favour and Regard; and upon this Account, it denotes that State of *Dominion*, *Power*, and *Dignity*, to which our Lord, in his human Nature, was actually advanced, upon his firſt Appearance in the Preſence of God, who is thereupon ſaid, *to have made him to be a Prince and a Saviour, to be Lord both of the Dead and of the Living, to be the Head of all Principality and Power, and to be Heir and Ruler of the Univerſe, having crowned him with Glory and Honour, put all Things in Subjection under his Feet, given him a Name*, or Title, *that is above every Name*, and made it a divine Decree, that, *at the Name of Jeſus, every Knee ſhould bow, and every Tongue confeſs him, to the Glory of God the Father.*

And the End and Purpoſe of it.

In the Prayer, which our bleſſed Saviour makes to his heavenly Father, a little before his Paſſion, he addreſſes himſelf in theſe Words—(*b*) *I have glorified thee on the Earth, I have finiſhed the Work, which thou gaveſt me to do; and now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own ſelf, with the Glory, which I had with thee before the World was.* The Form of which Petition, as it can relate to his *human* Nature only (for his *divine* is not capable either of Encreaſe or Diminution in Glory) ſo muſt it be ſuppoſed to mean the Exaltation of that Part of him to a Degree of Power and Authority, next under God himſelf: and, if he made this the Subject of his Prayer, there is good Reaſon to believe, that one great End of leaving the World, and returning to Heaven was to receive the *Reward* of his great Atchievements, and to enter upon the Fruition of that Life and Immortality, which he had purchaſed both for himſelf and others.

(*c*) *In my Father's Houſe*, ſays he, *are many Manſions, if it were not ſo, I would have told you; I go to prepare a Place for you, that where I am ye may be alſo.* As he was *God* indeed, and therefore *omnipreſent*, there was no need for his Removal, to viſit the Places, that were above; but as he was *Man*, it was expedient that he ſhould go to take Poſſeſſion and Seiſure of thoſe heavenly Dwellings, to which he was intitled; but to take Poſſeſſion of them in a *publick* Capacity, not for himſelf only, but for the whole Body of the Faithful whereof he is Head. In this Senſe (*d*) *our Forerunner is entered within the Veil for us:* In him our human Nature is already raiſed, and dignified; and in Virtue of his Seiſure, with him we are ſaid to (*e*) *be quickened, and to ſit together in heavenly Places.* But farther (*f*) *it is expedient*, ſays he, *that I ſhould go, for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you, but, if I depart, I will ſend him unto you:* and, accordingly, on the tenth Day after his Departure, this Promiſe he fulfilled to his Apoſtles in a ſingular and moſt miraculous Manner, beyond the Examples of former Inſpirations: and that he might give them a farther Reaſon for his Departure, (*g*) *hitherto have ye aſked nothing*, ſays he to his Diſciples, *in my Name, aſk, and ye ſhall receive, that your Joy may be full.* It is upon the Account of his Aſcenſion and Reſidence in Heaven, therefore, (*h*) *that we have an Advocate with the Father, even Jeſus Chriſt the Righteous, and he is a Propitiation for our Sins.* An *Advocate*, who being Bone of our Bone, and Fleſh of our Fleſh,

* The Author *of the Hiſtory of the Apoſtles Creed* is of Opinion, that this *Branch* of the *Article* was added, in Oppoſition to a Sort of *Hereticks*, mentioned by *Tertullian*, who did indeed own the Aſcenſion of our Saviour's human Body into Heaven, but affirmed, *that it remained there in a ſtupid and unactive Manner, void of Senſe, and without Chriſt, as a Scabbard is, when without a Sword:* But others contend, that, ſince our Saviour declares, that *hereafter ſhall ye ſee the Son of Man ſitting on the right Hand of God*, Matt. xxvi. 64. And St. *Peter*, and the reſt of the ſacred Penmen, frequently affirm, *that Chriſt is gone into Heaven, and is on the right Hand of God*, 2 Pet. iii. 22. or *ſet down on the right Hand of the Majeſty on high*, Heb. i. 3. with many more Expreſſions of the like Nature, the Compoſers of the Creed inſerted this *at firſt*, as a *fundamental* Truth, of which all *Converts* to *Chriſtianity*, whether *Jews* or *Gentiles*, were obliged, at their Baptiſm, to make a publick Confeſſion. *King*'s Hiſt. and *Grabe*'s Notes on Bp. *Bull*'s Judgment, &c.

(*a*) *Barrow* on the Creed. (*b*) John xvii. 4, 5. (*c*) John xiv. 2, 3. (*d*) Heb. vi. 19, 20. (*e*) Eph. ii. 5, 6. (*f*) John xvi. 7. (*g*) Ver. 24. (*h*) 1 John ii. 1.

and (*i*) *having, in all Points, been tempted like as we are, cannot but be touched with a Feeling of our Infirmities*, and muſt therefore be inclined to ſolicit our Cauſe with the utmoſt *Importunity*; an *Advocate*, who himſelf (*k*) *in the Days of his Fleſh, offered up Prayers and Supplications, with ſtrong Crying and Tears*, and therefore, from his own Caſe, learned to commiſerate thoſe, who are under the like Agonies of Grief or Diſconſolation; an *Advocate*, who has a *Right* to what he ſolicits, who has made the Bleſſings, he ſues for, the dear *Purchaſe* of his Blood, and therefore cannot be denied in what he aſks, without making his Sufferings of none Effect; and, laſtly, an *Advocate*, who, being at the right Hand of God, has always an Opportunity of Addreſs; being his only beloved Son, is in no Danger of meeting a Repulſe; and, (*l*) *having an unchangeable Prieſthood, is able alſo to ſave them to the uttermoſt, who come unto God by him, ſeeing he ever liveth to make Interceſſion for us.*

The OBJECTION.

" BUT, before we lay ſuch Streſs upon
" Chriſt's *Interceſſion*, it certainly
" becomes us to be well aſſured, that
" he really did aſcend into Heaven, and
" is now *ſitting at the right Hand of*
" *God*; for may not his Aſcenſion be
" taken in a *figurative* Senſe, (*m*) ſo as
" to denote no more, than that, upon
" his Reſurrection, his Body was *ſubli-*
" *mated* and refined to a greater Degree
" of Purity? Or might not (*n*) the *Sub-*
" *ſtance* of his Body *evaporate*, and be
" loſt in the Air through which it was
" conveyed, and ſo his Soul only appears
" in the Preſence of God? For if his
" Body was the ſame *numerical* Body,
" wherein he ſuffered, we cannot ſee,
" by what *Spring* or Power of Motion,
" it could raiſe itſelf into the *higheſt Hea-*
" *vens*, or, when it was actually arriv-
" ed there, how it was poſſible to be
" *ſeated* on the right Hand of God, who,
" as we all allow, has no *bodily Parts*;
" or, if by the *right Hand of God* we
" underſtand his *omnipotent Power*, then
" (*o*) will it follow, that as God is eve-
" ry where preſent by his *Power*, ſo Chriſt,
" with reſpect to his human Body, is
" every where preſent too; but this Infer-
" ence is every whit as abſurd, and there-
" fore theſe Expreſſions of *aſcending*, and
" *ſitting* (as (*p*) one tells us) muſt ne-
" ceſſarily be *allegorical*, and wrapt up
" in a Veil of *legal* Shadows and Re-
" preſentations. And good Reaſon indeed
" there is, from the Nature of Chriſt's
" Exaltation, to think it ſo: for, that the
" *Son of Man*, for a few Years Service
" and Sufferings, ſhould be conſtituted
" the *univerſal* Lord and Governor of
" the World, under the moſt high God
" and Father of all, is a *Reward*, ex-
" ceeding all Proportion of his *Merit*,
" and by much too high, and too great,
" for any human Creature to receive.
" He tells his Diſciples indeed, that *all*
" (*q*) *Power was given to him in Hea-*
" *ven and in Earth*; but how was it
" given him? He was not then aſcend-
" ed; and, if upon his Aſcent, he was ſure
" to be inveſted with it, we cannot con-
" ceive, how he came to *ſtay lingring* up-
" on Earth for the Space of *forty Days* af-
" ter his Reſurrection, nor can we imagine,
" where the Place of his *Abode* was, or in
" what Manner he employed himſelf, until
" the Time of his Departure. His De-
" parture however, one would think, had
" it been to take Poſſeſſion of a King-
" dom, would have been in a far more
" *magnificent*, and pompous Manner, than
" ſtealing to Heaven, as it were, in a
" Cloud, with none but his *Friends* and
" *Followers* to be Witneſſes and Specta-
" tors of it. When *Elijah* was tranſlat-
" ed into Heaven (for our Lord was not
" the firſt that went thither) (*r*) *fifty Men*
" *of the Sons of the Prophets* ſtood at a
" proper Diſtance to behold the Sight;
" and the Sight was not an opake con-
" denſed Cloud, to conceal what was
" tranſacted, but a *Chariot of Fire, and*
" *Horſes of Fire, bright* and refulgent,
" and attended with a *Whirlwind*, where-
" by he rode triumphantly, and like
" a *Prophet of God*. Since this then
" may

(*i*) Heb. iv. 15. (*k*) Heb. v. 7. (*l*) Heb. vii. 25. (*m*) *Fiddes*'s Body. (*n*) *Snape*'s Ser. Vol. II.
(*o*) *Fiddes*'s Body. (*p*) *Jackſon* on the Creed. (*q*) Matt. xxviii. 18. (*r*) 2 Kings ii. 7, 11.

" may be preſumed to be the uſual Way " of Suſception into Heaven, it reflects " ſome Diſcredit upon our Saviour's, that " it was quite in a different Manner, and " puts one in Mind of (*s*) the *Apotheoſis*, " or Conſecration of *Romulus*, and ſome " other *fictitious Stories* of *Heroes*, and " great Men, tranſlated into Heaven, " which in the *Pagan* Writers (in their " Poets more eſpecially) are obvious to " every common Reader."

Anſwered by ſhewing how our Lord's Aſcent might be facilitated.

GREAT and wonderful, no Doubt, was the *Alteration*, which paſſed upon our Saviour's Body at his *Reſurrection*, but much greater at his *Glorification*. (*t*) To give his Apoſtles a *Specimen* of this happy *Change*, he once took three of them along with him into the Mount, where he *tranſfigured* himſelf before them, and aſſumed, for a while, the Luſtre of a glorified Body; whereupon it is ſaid, that (*u*) *his Face ſhone like the Sun, and his Raiment* (pierced through with the Beams, which darted from his Limbs) *became as white as the Light*. But, though from hence it may be inferred, that the Glory of a *celeſtial* is of another Nature and Texture, than that of a terreſtrial Body; yet is it eaſy to imagine, how this might be effected, and yet the Body continue numerically the ſame? (*x*) For all Matter, as ſuch, being *uniform*, and capable of all Sorts of Motion, and, by Conſequence, of becoming either much *groſſer*, or much *purer*, the ſame Portion of Matter, that made a *thick* and heavy Body here on Earth, may be put into that Degree of *Purity* and Fineneſs, as no longer to be a fit Inhabitant of this *ſublunary* World, but meet to be tranſplanted into the Regions above. This gives an eaſy Solution of the ſuppoſed *Difficulty* of our Lord's Aſcenſion: For, if his *Body* was now become nimble, active, volatile, and vaſtly different from what it was before, and his *Soul*, ſet free from all Impediments, and following its natural Tendency and Inclination, had Power to tranſport it wherever it pleaſed, it could not well otherwiſe be, but that, when the proper Time was come for his Departure, his Body and Soul both ſhould move towards Heaven, as their proper Center and Place of Abode, and, being united with his divine Nature, ſhould willingly go, where the Godhead carried them, which could be no where elſe, but into the immediate Preſence, and Habitation of the moſt glorious Deity.

That he re-aſcended in the ſame Body.

BUT whatever Qualities we aſſign to our Lord's Reſurrection-Body, it is plain from his own Words to *Mary*, (*y*) *touch me not, for I am not yet aſcended to my Father*, confeſſedly ſpoken after his Reſurrection, that he had not yet aſcended, and that his Aſcenſion therefore muſt needs denote ſomething very different from his Reſurrection, viz. a *local* Removal of that very Body from Earth to Heaven. I ſay *that very Body*, (*z*) for had our Lord, at his Reſurrection, been *cloathed upon* with another Body, compoſed of a *celeſtial* Matter, quite different from the former conſtituent Parts of it, it would not, in any true and proper Senſe, have been the *Man Chriſt Jeſus, who was born of the Virgin Mary, and ſuffered under Pontius Pilate*, that aſcended, but (ſo far as a *Diſtinction* of Perſons can be founded in the different Parts of Matter, whereof their Bodies are compoſed) he would have been another, and quite a different Perſon, born and produced again after a quite different Manner. As therefore we can hardly ſuppoſe, that a Company of (*a*) *an hundred and twenty Perſons* (for ſo many the ſacred Account makes thoſe, that were preſent at our Lord's Aſcenſion) ſhould, all at once, be in a Dream, or under a Deluſion, when they ſaw him aſcend, and *looked ſtedfaſtly upon him, as he went up*; when, with eager and attentive Eyes, they purſued him, as he mounted ſlowly, and, (*b*) whether unwilling to part with their Maſter, and reſolved to keep him in View as long as they could, or ſtruck with Amazement at the bright Scene of Glory, that appeared upon opening the Heavens) could not recover themſelves, until they were awakened, as it were, from a Trance, by, *ye Men of Galilee, why ſtand ye gazing up into Heaven?* As we cannot well ſuppoſe, I ſay, that ſuch a Number of People together, and all fixed and attentive on their Object, could be under ſuch an Infatuation, as not to know their own Maſter, we muſt neceſſarily conclude, that his Aſcenſion was real, and from * that very

(*s*) *Edwards*'s Body Vol. I. (*t*) *Young*'s Serm. Vol. I. (*u*) Matt. xvii. 1, 2. (*x*) *Burnet* on the Art. (*y*) John xx. 17. (*z*) *Fiddes*'s Body Vol. I. (*a*) Acts i. 15. (*b*) *Snape*'s Serm. Vol. II.

* In the Scripture Account there ſeems to be ſome ſmall Difference, as to the *Place*, from whence our Lord aſcended. St. *Luke*, in *his Goſpel*, xxiv. 50. tells us, that it was from *Bethany*, but in his *Acts of the Apoſtles*, i. 12. from the Mount of *Olives*: This however is eaſily reconciled: For, as *Bethany* was a Village near

very *Mountain*, where, according to the Report of ſeveral *Travellers*, the *exact Print* of *his* (*c*) *ſacred Footſteps are ſtill to be ſeen, and cannot be obliterated.*

Which was not loſt *in its Paſſage.*

Some ancient *Hereticks* indeed were of Opinion, that the Body, with which our Lord aſcended, in its Paſſage up to Heaven, *vaniſhed* into the *Air*, or was *abſorb'd* by the *Sun*, or *diſperſed* among the *Elements*, from whence it was firſt taken: But, in Confutation of theſe wild and abominable Errors, the holy Records inform us, that the bleſſed Martyr, St. *Stephen*, even while he was here on Earth, (*d*) *ſaw the Heavens opened*, and diſcovered Chriſt, in a Poſture ready to receive his departing *Soul*, *ſtanding at the right Hand of God*; that St. *Paul*, not only in his Way to *Damaſcus*, (*e*) *heard his Voice*, complaining of his Perſecution of him, but likewiſe (*f*) *in the Temple*, when *he was in a Trance*, and then probably *caught up into the third Heaven*, both beheld his *Perſon*, and received his *Inſtructions*; and that St. *John*, in the Iſle of *Patmos*, had ſo plain a Viſion of him, that (according to his Deſcription) (*g*) *his Head and his Hair were white as Wool, as white as Snow; his Eyes were as a Flame of Fire; his Feet like unto fine Braſs, as if they burned in a Furnace, and his Voice as the Sound of many Waters.* Such Evidence we have from theſe ſeveral *Apparitions*, ſince the Time of his Aſcenſion, that his divine Perſon is ſtill ſubſiſting, and, as many more Ages, perhaps, are to intervene before the coming of the Day of Judgment, (*h*) *him muſt the Heavens receive, until the Times of Reſtitution*, or final Conſummation *of all Things:* But in what Manner he reſides there, or whether the Words of the Creed are to be underſtood in a *literal* or *figurative* Senſe, is a Queſtion, that admits of ſome Debate.

How Chriſt may truly ſit on God's right Hand.

We allow indeed, that God's *Eſſence* is *boundleſs*, and immenſurable, every where preſent, and yet every where *inviſible*; but ſtill we ſay, that there is a *Glory*, which is, as it were, the *Train* and Attendance of his Eſſence (by the (*i*) *Pſalmiſt*'s Authority, we may call it the *Garment*, and by the (*k*) Apoſtle's, the *Dwelling* or Palace of his Eſſence) and this Glory, or Manifeſtation of his Preſence is ſuch, as we muſt allow to be * *viſible*, and more eminently conſpicuous in one Place than in another. (*l*) There is a *Diſtinction* therefore to be made between the *eſſential* and *majeſtick* Preſence of God, for his *eſſential* Preſence is infinite, and ſo every where, and every where unſeen; but his *majeſtick* Preſence is the *Notification* or Diſcovery of his eſſential Preſence by ſome Kind of *magnificent* luminous *Appearance* in a *determinate* Place, which Place is therefore called the Habitation, the Seat, or Throne of God. Now, tho' the divine Nature is ſuch in itſelf, (*m*) *that the Heaven of Heavens cannot contain* it; yet if we may ſuppoſe any Meaning *in* (*n*) *looking down from Heaven, thy Holy Habitation*; (*o*) *look down from Heaven, the Habitation of thy Holineſs and Glory*; (*p*) *hear thou from Heaven, thy dwelling Place*; and (*q*) *the Lord dwelleth on high, and yet beholdeth the Things, that are done in Heaven and Earth*; we cannot but conclude, that though he be *really* and eſſentially preſent every where alike, yet, with Regard to the *Exerciſe* of his Power, and the *Manifeſtation* of his Glory, he is, in a peculiar Manner, *reſident* in Heaven, and that

near *Jeruſalem, about fifteen Furlongs from it*, John xviii. 18. and ſeated at the Foot of the Mount, *called Olivet*, in which Reſpect it is ſtiled *Bethany at the Mount of Olives*, Mark xi. 1. So whether Mount *Olivet* was eſteemed to be within the *Precincts* of the Village of *Bethany*, or *Bethany* was reckoned for the lower Part of that Mount, it is much the ſame Thing: Only, as this Mount was the *Place*, to which our Lord frequently repaired in the Days of his Humiliation, and juſt before his Paſſion, there is Reaſon to ſuppoſe, that this was the Place, from whence he took his *Riſe* up to Heaven; eſpecially conſidering the Prediction of *Zechariah*, viz. *his Feet ſhall ſtand in that Day upon the Mount of Olives, which is before Jeruſalem, on the Eaſt, and the Mount of Olives ſhall cleave in the midſt thereof*, Ch. xiv. 4. and that over the very Spot, from whence he aſcended, *Helena*, the Mother of *Conſtantine the Great*, erected a Chapel called the Chapel of *Aſcenſion*, which was ſituate on this Mount. *Heylyn* on the Creed, and *Edwards*'s Body Vol. I.

* *Thus the Glory of God* is ſaid to *have appeared on Mount Sinai ſix days together*, and afterwards, in the *Sanctuary* it is ſaid to have *reſted*, and *dwelt*, becauſe of its long and uninterrupted Continuance there. At the *Dedication* of the Temple, it is ſaid to *have filled the Houſe*; at the *Birth* of our Saviour, to have *ſhon round the Shepherds*; and at his *Transfiguration*, to have been ſeen by St. *Peter*, and the two other Apoſtles, that accompanied him, which are all Inſtances of the *majeſtick* and viſible Preſence of God. *Young*'s Ser. Vol. I.

(*c*) *Sandy*'s Travels L. 3. (*d*) Acts vii. 56. (*e*) Acts ix. 4. (*f*) xxii. 17, 18.
(*g*) Rev. i. 14, 15. (*h*) Acts iii. 21. (*i*) Pſ. liv. 2. (*k*) 1 Tim. vi. 16. (*l*) *Young*'s Ser. Vol. I.
(*m*) 1 Kings viii. 27. (*n*) Deut. xxvi. 16. (*o*) Iſ. lxiii. 15. (*p*) 1 Kings viii. 30. (*q*) Pſ. cxiii. 5, 6.

that out of the many *Mansions*, which he hath there erected, he hath chosen one Place, above all the rest, in which he fixes his Throne, and there shews himself in all the *Splendor* of his Majesty to his heavenly *Courtiers*, Saints, and Angels. Now admitting the divine Majesty here to be seated in some Form of *Elevation*, that may have a small Resemblance of a mighty *Monarch*, sitting on his Throne of State (for in this Manner St. *John*, (*r*) who, by a *Door, opened in Heaven*, was admitted to the *beatifick* Vision, represents *the King of Kings*) (*s*) though this Imperial Throne of God has neither *right Side* nor *left*, yet since our Saviour, who ascended in his natural Body, had his *right* and *left Hand*, as other Bodies have, it will hence certainly follow, that he, sitting by the Throne of God, with his left Hand next to the Throne, may, in strict *Propriety* of Speech, without any *Trope* or *Figure*, be said to sit *on the right Hand of God*, or *on the right Hand of the Throne of God*, which amounts to the same Thing; and to this Sense I am the rather inclined, because we find St. *Paul*, (*t*) *a Man of Visions and Revelations of the Lord*, who had a Glimpse at least, if not a perfect Sight of the heavenly Glories, expressing himself in the same Manner, when he tells us, that *the Holy Jesus*, (*u*) *having endured the Cross, and despised the Shame, is now set down at the right Hand of the Throne of God.*

And yet not be omnipresent.

Thus may the *Session* of our blessed Lord be properly enough resolved into a *literal* Sense: But, if by the *right Hand* of God we are to understand his *almighty Power*, it will not therefore follow, that, because the Power of God is *infinite*, and extends itself over the whole Universe, he, who sits at the right Hand of God in this Signification, must therefore be *co-extended* (with Regard to his corporeal Presence) to the same Degree of *Immensity*; because this Notion (upon the Supposition of any other *material* Being in the World) necessarily implies a *Penetration* of Bodies, or that two, or any other Number of Bodies, may be in the same Place, and yet have a separate and distinct Position in it, at the same Time, which is Absurdity enough in all Conscience: But then it implies farther, (*x*) that our Saviour's Body, the Body, wherewith he arose from the Dead, and ascended into Heaven, is not now the *same* Body, but a Body of *immense* Magnitude, and not only of *equal* Dimensions with *all other* Bodies put together, but extending itself (for so the divine *Power* does) *beyond* the Bounds of all corporeal Beings whatever, which, in my Imagination, is most monstrous to think on: Whereas the plain Truth is, that, as the *Properties* of the two Natures of Christ, from their very first Conjunction, were always *distinct*, even so they * continued, in like Manner, after their Ascension. The Body of Christ, however *defecated* and made free from all Obstructions, had still the same *Dimensions* of a Body, did take up a determinate *Space*, and was *circumscribed* by proper Limits; and, as it was not by his *external* Word, or *bodily* Touch, when here on Earth, but by a *divine Power*, which resided in him, and, whenever he pleased, accompanied his speaking, or feeling, that he allayed the *Storm*, and raised the *Dead*, so it is not by any *local* Site, or Position of his Body, but by his *Relation* to the Father, as his true and proper Son, that the divine Power is communicated to him; and it is in Virtue of the Union of two Natures, as he is both God and Man, that we can truly say, that *in him dwelleth the Godhead bodily*, with all its infinite *Powers* and *Perfections*, though his Body still retains all the *Properties* and *Affections*, essential to a Body, even though it is seated in Heaven.

Why he came to be so highly dignified.

To be seated in Heaven, and *on the right Hand of God*, is the highest Dignation certainly, we can imagine, and too glorious, one would think, for *Flesh and Blood*

* This is a Doctrine, wherein all the Fathers, with one Consent, do agree, viz. *that, notwithstanding the Accessions of Glory, and Immortality to the Body of Christ, yet it still preserved all the Properties of a natural Body*; For so St. *Jerom* tells us, that "Christ ascended into Heaven, and sitteth on the right Hand of the Father, "the very same Nature of his Body still remaining, in which he was born, suffered, and did rise again, be"cause the Substance of his Body was not done away, but only glorified." In *Symb.* And to the same Purpose we find St. *Austin* asserting, that *Christ, by giving Majesty, and Immortality to his Body, did not destroy the Nature of it*; and therefore it nearly concerns us to take Heed, *not to maintain his Divinity on such faulty Grounds, as to destroy his Humanity, or so to advance the Man, as to spoil his Body.* Epist. ad Dardanum, with many more, that might be produced, were there any Occasion for it, in a *Matter* so little liable to Exception. *Heylyn* on the Creed.

(*r*) Rev. iv. (*s*) *Heylyn* on the Creed. (*t*) 2 Cor. xii. 1. (*u*) Heb. xii. 2.

(*x*) *Fiddes's* Body Vol. I.

to be admitted to; but (*y*) when it is remembered, that this was the Fleſh and Blood, which the *eternal* Son of God condeſcended to honour with his *perſonal Reſidence*; that in this he laboured under all the Wants, and Infirmities, the contumelious Treatment, and bitter Agonies, to which he ſubmitted, but could only undergo, as he was Man, and cloathed with Fleſh and Blood; it will be eaſy to diſcern the Reaſon for a Recompence as *extraordinary*, as the Sufferings had been, to make an Amends for his Abaſement and Humiliation, and to remove effectually the *Scandal* of the Croſs, by having the Body *crucified* placed on the right Hand of the Majeſty on high; for ſuch is the Declaration of the *Saints* and *Angels* in Heaven: *(z) Worthy is the Lamb, that was ſlain, to receive Power, and Riches, and Wiſdom, and Strength, and Honour, and Glory, and Bleſſing, for he hath redeemed us to God by his Blood, out of every Kindred, and Tongue, and People, and Nation.*

Why he delayed his Aſcent.

THIS *Honour and Power*, our Saviour tells his Apoſtles, was given unto him, before his Aſcenſion, (*a*) but this he muſt be underſtood to ſpeak by Way of *Prolepſis*, or Anticipation only, a very uſual Scheme of Speech in holy Writ, when it means to expreſs Things of *certain Futurity*, as if they were *actually* ſubſiſting. And this, by the Way, affords us one Reaſon, why our Lord was not ſo very *eager* to leave his Diſciples, and to return into Heaven, as we may imagine. From the Moment of his Reſurrection indeed, he was entitled to that Reward, which his Humiliation had purchaſed; but as he knew, that it was repoſited in the Hands of a faithful Keeper, he did not *ſnatch* at it with Eagerneſs and Haſte, but delayed, for ſome Time, his ſolemn *Inauguration* to his regal Office, and taking Poſſeſſion of the Joys of Heaven, while there was any Thing material yet left upon Earth for him to tranſact; and theſe were the Affairs he had to tranſact. His Apoſtles *doubted* of the Truth of his Reſurrection, and therefore he was to give them ſuch convincing Proofs and Aſſurances of it, as might enable them to convince others, and become *authentick* Witneſſes of that great *Matter of Fact*, upon which, as upon *a chief corner Stone*, the whole Frame of his Religion was to be founded. (*b*) They *laboured* under ſtrong Prejudices, in Relation to his Character, and Sufferings, and the Kingdom, which they expected him to *reſtore* to *Iſrael*; theſe Prejudices therefore he was to remove and diſpell, by expounding to them the *Scriptures* concerning himſelf, by informing them of the Nature of his *ſpiritual* Kingdom, and inſtructing them in what Method it was to be erected, and propagated. They were *tranſported* with Joy, when they came to be aſſured of his Reſurrection, and ready enough to imagine, that he would ever abide with them; and therefore, as he was to *wean* them by Degrees from their Fondneſs for his Perſon, he was not to *withdraw* himſelf from their Sight at once, but to appear and diſappear to them at fit *Intervals*, diſcontinuing, and reſuming his Converſation with them, the better to prepare them for the Thoughts of his final Departure: And as he was ſhortly to ſend down his bleſſed Spirit, he was to fit and qualify them for the Reception of that heavenly *Gueſt*, that, when he arrived, he might find them *meet* to be Partakers of his bleſſed *Influences* and Illuminations.

How he employed himſelf.

And where he abode during his Stay.

THESE are ſome of the Reaſons for our Lord's continuing with his Diſciples ſome Time after he aroſe, and theſe are ſome of the Affairs wherein we may ſuppoſe that he buſied himſelf, during that Stay: But as his Stay, in that Time, was far from being conſtant with them, (*c*) it has, with ſome Probability of Reaſon, been imagined, that he frequently aſcended and deſcended from Heaven, between his Reſurrection and final Aſcenſion, and that, during that Interval, his *ordinary* Reſidence was in the Regions above, though he ſometimes came down, and converſed with his Diſciples here below. Which Notion (if it proves true) not only accounts for the Employ of his Time, and the Place of his Abode, but helps to explain likewiſe thoſe difficult Words of his to *Mary Magdalene*, (*d*) *touch me not, for I am not yet aſcended to my Father*, * which ſeem to imply that he was juſt then upon the Point of departing, *but*

(*y*) *Stanhope's* Ep. and Goſp. Vol. III. (*z*) Rev. v. 12, 9. (*a*) *Scot's* Mediator. (*b*) Bp. *Atterbury's* Ser. Vol. III. (*c*) *Whiſton's* Ser. and Eſſays. (*d*) John xx. 17.

* There is another Way of expounding this *Text*, which moſt *Annotators* ſeem to prefer, and that is this —— *touch me not*, or do not loſe Time in *holding*, and embracing, and hanging thus about me (for the whole of *Mary Magdalene's* Tranſaction, at another Time, in handling our Saviour's Feet, waſhing them with her Tears, wiping them with the Hair of her Head, and kiſſing them, is all called *touching* him, Luke vii. 39.)

but go to my Brethren, and ſay unto them, I aſcend unto my Father, and your Father, unto my God, and your God.

Which was 40 Days, and why.

HOWEVER this be, that his *laſt* and ſolemn Aſcenſion ſhould be *forty Days* after his Reſurrection preciſely, in this there ſeems to be a certain *Conformity* to ſome of his other Actions: For, (*e*) as forty Days was the Diſtance of Time between his *Birth*, and his *Preſentation* in the Temple of *Jeruſalem*, and *this* the Number of Days he employed in the *Preparation* of himſelf, for the Diſcharge of his *prophetick* Office on Earth, ſo did the like Number intervene between his Birth from the Grave, and Appearance in the Temple of *Jeruſalem*, which is above, and the like Number ſuffered to paſs, before he entered upon his *regal* and *mediatorial Office* in Heaven.

The glorious Manner of his Aſcent.

IN what Manner *he entered upon it*, or aſcended up to Heaven, in order to his *Inauguration*, the *Evangeliſts* indeed are not full of pompous Language to deſcribe, but they have ſaid enough to aſſure us, that the *Form* of his Aſcent was certainly very magnificent. For, if he went up in the ſame Manner, in which he ſhall deſcend to Judgment, *viz. (f) with his mighty Angels in a flaming Fire*, we cannot but preſume, that he was attended with a glorious Retinue of this *heavenly Hoſt*, to reſound his Praiſe, as he went along, and to adorn the Solemnity of his *Proceſſion:* and, for this Reaſon, ſome (*g*) *Interpreters* of no mean *Note*, according to the *Stile* and *Analogy* of Scripture, have ſuppoſed, that by (*h*) the *Cloud*, which received him in his Aſcent, we are to underſtand a vaſt *Multitude* of theſe celeſtial *Miniſters*. They indeed, as they are *Spirits*, and inviſible Beings, could not be diſcerned by the *naked* Eyes of the Apoſtles, unleſs they had aſſumed an human Shape, as we find *two* of them were ordered to do for the Purpoſe abovementioned; but as there was a very great Company of theſe celeſtial Inhabitants to give notice to the *Shepherds* of our Saviour's Birth, and to *ſing Praiſes* to God on that joyful Occaſion; ſo may we reaſonably infer, that no leſs a Number of them, if not the whole Choir of Angels, was ſent forth to attend their *Lord and King* with loud Acclamations, when he went to take Poſſeſſion of his *Imperial* Throne. St. *Luke*'s Expreſſion therefore is, that *he* (*i*) *was carried up into Heaven*, which could not be by the Motion of any *Clouds*, ſince they reach no farther than the *lower* Region, and muſt therefore have been effected by the Power and Energy of Angels, who are ſtiled in Scripture, not only God's *Hoſt*, but his *Chariot* likewiſe, (for (*k*) *the Chariots of God are twenty thouſand, even thouſands of Angels*) upon which he rides or is carried in *Triumph*, when, after the Manner of Men, he is *deſcribed*, as coming down from Heaven *to take Vengeance of his Enemies:* and in this glorious *Equipage*, as we may reaſonably conclude, did our bleſſed Lord aſcend into the higheſt Heavens, paſſing through the ſeveral celeſtial *Orbs*, till he came into the Palace, and Preſence of the great King, and was *brought and preſented before the ancient of Days* (as the Prophet (*l*) *Daniel* had foretold) and there inveſted with ſupreme Dominion over all Creatures in Heaven and Earth, (*m*) *being made ſo much better than the Angels, as he has by Inheritance a more excellent Name than they.*

That of Elijah reſemblant, but inferior to it.

FROM what has been ſaid we cannot but obſerve, that, as the Prophet *Elijah* was an eminent *Type* of our Saviour Chriſt, ſo his *Tranſlation* muſt bear ſome Reſemblance to our Lord's *Aſcenſion*; and that therefore his *Chariot of Fire, and Horſes of Fire* (according to the Senſe of the beſt Interpreters) were nothing elſe, but a Company of Angels, *(n) thoſe flaming Miniſters of the Almighty*, which took him up, and carried him into Heaven; but then the *Type* was manifeſtly ſhort, and defective in this—that, whereas *fifty Men only of the Sons of the Prophets*, and theſe at a conſiderable Diſtance, were

vii. 39. "do not do this, I ſay, for *I ſhall not yet* aſcend to my Father, and therefore you will have Opportu-" nities enough of ſeeing me, and ſatisfying yourſelf with the Truth of my Reſurrection; loſe no Time " therefore, but go quickly with my Meſſage to my Brethren." Here indeed the *Aoriſt*, or *Preter Tenſe*, is rendered in a *future* Senſe; but this they make a ſmall Objection, becauſe, (as *Grammarians* have obſerved in ſeveral Paſſages,) this is far from being an unuſual Thing. *Whitby*'s Annot. in Locum, and Trial of the Witneſſes.

(*e*) *Kidder*'s Meſſias. (*f*) 2 Theſſ. i. 7, 8. (*g*) *Hammond*, and *Whitby*. (*h*) Acts i. 9. (*i*) Luke xxiv. 51. (*k*) Pſal. lxviii. 17. (*l*) Ch. vii. ver. 13. (*m*) Heb. i. 4. (*n*) Ver. 7.

were Spectators of his Aſſumption, our Saviour had above double the Number of his Diſciples, all ſtanding by, and ſurrounding him, to be Eye-witneſſes of *his:* whereas he was conveyed into ſome of the *inferior* Manſions of Glory, from whence *(o)* he deſcended, with *Moſes*, at the *Transfiguration* on the Mount, our Lord was the firſt Perſon, that was tranſlated into the *higheſt Heaven, the Holy of Holies*, which none might enter, but the *High Prieſt* only; and whereas all, that the Prophet, upon his Departure, had to beſtow, was *(p) a double Portion of his Spirit* upon one of his Followers only, our Lord, in *(q)* a few Days after his Aſcenſion, ſent down upon the whole *College* of his Apoſtles Gifts miraculous, and out of Number.

The Evangeliſts true *and* impartial *Hiſtorians.*

As therefore we have ſhewn above, that the Evangeliſts were *plain* and ſimple Writers, who related Facts, juſt as they happened, without any *Flouriſhes*, or Embelliſhment; who affected no *hyperbolical* Expreſſions, nor *(r) followed any cunningly deviſed Fables, when we made known unto you the Power and Glory of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, ſo have we reaſon to believe, that, had he not been exalted in the Manner, that they teſtify, no Motive upon Earth would have prevailed with them to have recorded it. They recorded his mean *Parentage*, his obſcure *Birth*, his low *Condition* of Life, and all the other *Steps* of his Humiliation, even to his cruel and ignominious Death; and why they ſhould make the remaining Part of his Hiſtory ſo very different, ſo very glorious, can be imputed to nothing, but a pure Conſciouſneſs of its Truth. Let falſe and flattering Hiſtorians then write what they pleaſe, to make it be believed, that the firſt *Founder* of the *Roman* Empire was hurried away in a *mighty Tempeſt*, and placed among the Number of the Gods, our Faith of the *viſible* and *perſonal* Aſſumption of our bleſſed Lord is not founded upon the Teſtimony of any infamous ſuborned *Procurus*, but is ſupported by Witneſſes of unexceptionable Integrity, and recorded by the infallible Penmen of the ſacred Writings: and as for the other *ſubſequent Fictions*, whether * among *Heathens*, or † *Mahometans*, that were invented on Purpoſe ‡ to *rival*, and diſcredit our Saviour's Hiſtory, there is this uſeful

All the other fictitious.

(o) Matt. xvii. 3. *(p)* 2 Kings ii. 9, &c. *(q)* Acts ii. *(r)* 2 Pet. i. 16.

* Among the *Heathens* the moſt famous Man of this Kind was *Apollonius* of *Tyana*, whom *Hierocles*, and ſome other Enemies of Chriſtianity, endeavoured to ſet up as a *Rival* to our Saviour, and all his Actions. *Philoſtratus*, who has wrote his Life, relates many ſtrange Stories of him, both as to the *Innocence* of his Life, and the *Miracles*, that he wrought, and, among his Miracles, has given us a long Account of this ——that, being once arraigned before *Domitian*, upon Pretence of his ſacrificing a Child, and foretelling that *Nerva* ſhould be Emperor, after ſome Diſcourſe, he vaniſhed out of the Court, to the Amazement of the *Emperor*, and the reſt of the *Judges*, and, in a ſhort Time after, was with his Friends *Damis*, and *Demetrius* (who were then at *Puteoli*) three Days Journey from *Rome*, and at laſt was taken up to Heaven in a wonderful Manner. The Author of his Life however, who tells us this, gives us to underſtand, that he was a Perſon, who greatly affected the Study of *judiciary Aſtrology*, and dealt in *ſtrange Ceremonies*, from whence he leaves us to gueſs, that he was (as moſt of that Crew were at that Time) a *Wizard*. *Echard*'s Ch. Hiſt. and *Edwards*'s Body, Vol. I.

† *Mahomet*, while he lived, pretended, that he was frequently carried up to Heaven, and tells ſuch *monſtrous* Stories of what he ſaw there, (an Heap of ſuch *nonſenſical Abſurdities*) as ſurely cannot find Credit with any of his Followers. He often uſed however to *cajole* his Diſciples with Aſſurances, that, at one Time or other, he ſhould be *wrapt* up into Heaven, towards the *Cloſe* of his Life, and accordingly (even after he was dead) they expected when his Body ſhould mount to *Paradiſe*; but having waited a long Time to no Purpoſe, they *counterfeited* ſomething, that looked like an *Aſcenſion*, and made ſome poor *Pilgrim-Turks* believe, that he now hangs in the Air, held up there in an *Iron-Cheſt*, or Coffin, by the powerful Attraction of *Load-Stones*. But this is all a fabulous *Romance:* for his *Tomb* (which is indeed of *Stone*) as ſeveral Eye-witneſſes do teſtify, lies upon the Ground. *Nichols*'s Conf. Vol. II. *Edwards*'s Body Vol. I. and *Prideaux*'s Life of *Mahomet*.

‡ That not only the Life of *Apollonius* by *Philoſtratus*, but thoſe of ſeveral other *Platonick* Philoſophers; ſuch as the Life of *Pythagoras* by *Porphyry*, and *Jamblicus*; that of *Plotinus*, by *Porphyry*; and thoſe of *Porphyry*, *Jamblicus*, *Sopater*, &c. by *Eunapius*, were deſigned to diſparage the Goſpel Hiſtory, we cannot reaſonably doubt, if we do but conſider, that this Manner of Life-writing was a *Taſte*, which the Enemies of Chriſtianity fell into at that Time. They had obſerved, that the Religion of *Jeſus* had made its Way in the World, recommended by the Purity of its *Precepts*, and ſupported by the Power of its *Miracles*; and therefore, to ſtop its Progreſs, it was neceſſary to produce Miracles in *Paganiſm*, and every other Argument, that they thought Chriſtianity could boaſt of: and, whereas the Actions of *Jeſus* were continued down to us by four *Evangeliſts*, who wrote an Account of the *principal* Occurrences of his Life,

ful Leſſon, that we may learn from them, *viz.* that, by vainly attempting to *imitate* this wonderful Tranſaction, they have given a full Atteſtation (though they did not mean to do it) of our Lord's undoubted Exaltation, and of the Authority of thoſe Records, (*s*) *wherein is ſet forth in Order a Declaration of thoſe Things, which are moſt ſurely believed among us.*

The DISSERTATION.

Of our Lord's Interceſſion, and Regal Office at God's right Hand.

What our Saviour did on Earth, *and now does in* Heaven, *in Relation to his Offices of* Prophet, Prieſt, *and* King.

THE three great *Offices*, which our bleſſed Saviour, as the true *Meſſias*, and only *Mediator* between God and Man, was to execute, were that of *Prophet*, *Prieſt*, and *King*. As *Prophet*, he was not ſo much to foretel *future* Events, as to *expound*, and make known unto us the Will of God by divine *Revelation*, and to *confirm* the Doctrines and Precepts, that he gave us, by *Signs, and mighty Wonders*. As *Prieſt*, he was not only to offer a Sacrifice for the Expiation of our Sins, but, by exhibiting that Sacrifice in the Preſence of God, to move, and ſolicit him to be merciful and propitious to us: and as a *King*, he was to enact wiſe *Laws*, to appoint proper *Miniſters* in his Kingdom, to protect and defend his *Subjects*, reward the *Loyal*, and puniſh the *Rebellious*. The *whole* of his *prophetick* Office he performed while on Earth: for, in thoſe Sermons, Parables, and Diſcourſes of his, which we find recorded in the *Evangeliſts*, he hath made a full and perfect *Revelation* of the Will of God, concerning the Way and Method of our Salvation, and the *Truth* of this Revelation hath confirmed by ſuch miraculous *Operations*, as were a convincing Proof of his divine *Miſſion*. One *half* of his *prieſtly* Office he took care to fulfil, in offering himſelf upon the Altar of his Croſs a true and perfect Sacrifice for the Sins of all Mankind; and one *Part* of his *regal* Office, *viz.* his giving good *Laws*, and appointing proper *Miniſters* in his Kingdom, he hath likewiſe accompliſhed in thoſe excellent Diſcourſes, which though he delivered as a *Prophet*, he had Power and Authority to *enact* as a *Legiſlator*, and in commiſſioning his *Apoſtles*, and in them their *Succeſſors*, to plant his Goſpel and to rule his Church. The other Part of his *ſacerdotal* Function, *viz.* the *Preſentation* of his Sacrifice before God, and, in Virtue of that, his making *Interceſſion* for us; and the other Branches of his *regal* Office, *viz.* his particularly protecting his Kingdom the *Church*, and puniſhing remarkably its Enemies and Perſecutors; his favouring and rewarding the faithful, but ſeverely puniſhing the rebellious Subjects of it: Theſe are the Things, which he is now continually doing at the right Hand of God, and what we are to make the Matter of our preſent *Diſquiſition*.

The Nature *of our Lord's Interceſſion,*

UNDER the *Levitical* Diſpenſation, (*t*) when any *common* Sacrifice was ſlain, the Prieſt was to ſprinkle ſome of the Blood of it round about the Altar of *Burnt-offerings*. In the *Sin-offering* for the High-Prieſt and the Congregation, he was to carry the Blood within the *Sanctuary*, and ſprinkle it ſeven Times before the *Veil* of the Sanctuary, and put ſome of it upon the Horns of the *Altar of Incenſe*: But, at the *great Day* of *Expiation*, the *High Prieſt* himſelf, having ſlain the Sacrifice, was to carry the Blood of it into the *Holy of Holies*, and there, with his Finger, ſprinkle it ſeven Times before the *Mercy Seat*. Now this *ſprinkling* of Blood, the common *Vehicle* of Life, was nothing elſe, but a ſolemn *Preſentation* of the Life of the ſacrificed Animal to God, as an *Exchange*, or Price of Redemption for the forfeited Life of the Offender. And as the End of all divine Worſhip, whether *natural* or *inſtituted*, is either to *implore* or to *commemorate* God's Grace and Favour, this ſolemn Act of Sprinkling the Blood in *expiatory* Sacrifices was certainly a *Form* of imploring God's Pardon of thoſe Sins, for which the Expiation was deſigned,

Life, together with the *Acts of the Apoſtles*; ſo they, in the ſame Manner, ſet about writing the Lives of their great *Philoſophers*, hoping to find their Account in thus oppoſing Miracles to Miracles, and *Magick* to the *Power* of God. The Diſſert. at the End of *Houttevill*'s Crit. and Hiſt. Diſc.

(*s*) Luke i. 1. (*t*) *Scot*'s Mediator.

and a kind of *ſilent Prayer* for ſuch Mercies and Favours, as it ſhould pleaſe an appeaſed and reconciled Deity to beſtow. As therefore the High-Prieſt's Addreſs to God for the People conſiſted in preſenting the Blood of the Sacrifice to him, and in ſprinkling it before the *Mercy Seat*, which was the *Throne* of the divine Majeſty; ſo our bleſſed Saviour, after he had offered up himſelf as a Sacrifice for our Sins upon Earth, aſcended into Heaven, the true Type of the *Holy of Holies*, and there exhibiting, not his Blood, but his crucified Body to God, does, by that ſignificant Action, continually intercede for us, and that * more prevalently, than if he employed all the *Eloquence of Men and Angels*.

And the Efficacy *of it.*

FOR it is in *Virtue* of this, that he prevails with God to accept our Prayers and Supplications to him, otherwiſe too imperfect, too impure indeed, to approach the divine Ear; and for this Reaſon he is repreſented as the *Angel of the Covenant*, (*u*) *who, at the golden Altar before the Throne of God, offers up the Prayers of the Saints incenſed* by the Merit of his moſt precious Blood: In *Virtue* of this, that he *ſeconds* our Petitions by joining his Prayers to ours; his Prayers, which are enforced with a juſt *Claim*, and, pleading a *Right* to the Bleſſings they ſue for, encourage us (*x*) *to come with Boldneſs to the Throne of Grace to find Mercy and Help in the Time of Need:* In *Virtue* of this, that the Gifts and Graces of God's bleſſed Spirit are beſtowed upon us, to enlighten our Underſtandings, regulate our Wills and Affections, and, by *helping our Infirmities*, both to (*y*) *inſtruct us how to pray*, and *to make Interceſſion for us with Groanings, that cannot be uttered:* In *Virtue* of this, that we are admitted to a *better* and more merciful *Covenant*, where, in Lieu of an *unſinning* Obedience, a ſincere Endeavour to pleaſe God is accepted, and all our *involuntary* Faults and Failings come under the *general Satisfaction* made by Chriſt, leſt, (*z*) *if God ſhould be extreme to mark what is done amiſs, no Fleſh ſhould be able to ſtand:* In *Virtue* of this, that (*a*) *Repentance and Remiſſion of Sins are preached to all Nations*, and that we have obtained a general *Grant* of Pardon and Forgiveneſs, inſomuch that every one, who ſincerely believes, and truly repents him of his Trangreſſions ſhall (*b*) *be juſtified from all Things, from which he could not be juſtified by the Law of Moſes:* In *Virtue* of this, laſtly, that we receive from Heaven all the Bleſſings we enjoy, both *ſpiritual* and *temporal*; *Protection* in Danger, *Relief* in Neceſſity, *Comfort* in Sorrow, *Patience* in Tribulation, *Content* in Sickneſs, *Courage* at our Diſſolution, and in the very *Grave* an *Hope full of Immortality*; for, though (*c*) *the Wages of Sin is Death, yet the Gift of God is eternal Life, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.* Theſe are ſome of the Benefits of Chriſt's *Interceſſion* for us at God's right Hand; and let us in the next Place enquire into the Adminiſtration of his *regal* Office.

Our Lord's Inveſtiture was to his Kingdom, and his regal Acts, of protecting his Church.

THAT our bleſſed Lord, as he was *lineally* deſcended from the Royal Family of *David*, and the *adopted* Son of his *reputed* Father *Joſeph*, to whom the *Right* of Succeſſion to the Kingdom of *Iſrael* did properly belong, and was therefore truly *born King of the Jews*, is what I had occaſion to take notice of before; but that *Title*, (though he did not utterly diſclaim it) he ſuffered to lie *dormant*, as it were, while he here ſojourned, nor was he actually *inaugurated*, till after his *Reſurrection*, or put in full Poſſeſſion of his *regal* Power, until his *Aſcenſion*, and *Seſſion* at God's right Hand. Then indeed, under God the Father, he was conſtituted the univerſal *Governor* of the World: All *Powers* and *Principalities*, whether in *Heaven* or *Earth*, were ſubjected to him: All Nations, even *Heathens* and *Infidels*, were

* The Preſentation of our Lord's ſacrificed Body before God (though no Language can reach the Force and *Emphaſis* of it) may be ſuppoſed *virtually* to include ſome ſuch Addreſs, as this—— " O my " Father, behold this *ſacrificed* Body of mine, which, by thy Conſent and Approbation, hath been *ſubſti-* " *tuted* to bear the Puniſhment, which was due to thee from Mankind. Through theſe Wounds I have " chearfully poured out the precious *Blood of God*, as a *Ranſom* for the Sins of the World: For the Sake " of this Blood therefore, be thou ſo far *propitious* to thoſe miſerable Sinners, for whom it was ſhed, as, " upon Condition that they repent, to accept it in Exchange for the *Lives* of the Souls, which are for- " feited to thee, to releaſe them from the Obligation, they are under to die eternally, and, upon their " final Perſeverance in Well-doing, to crown them with eternal Life. *Scot*'s Mediator.

(*u*) Rev. viii. 3. (*x*) Heb. iv. 16. (*y*) Rom. viii. 26. (*z*) Pſal. cxxx. 3. (*a*) Luke xxiv. 47. (*b*) Acts xiii. 39. (*c*) Rom. vi. 23.

were put under his Dominion; but the Church, as it conſiſts of that Part of the World, which owns his *Authority*, and makes viſible *Profeſſion* of Allegiance to him, and Submiſſion to his Laws, is, in a more peculiar Manner, his *Kingdom*, for ſo it is ſaid, that (*d*) *the Father hath put all Things under his Feet, and given him to be Head of all Things to the Church, i. e.* hath veſted him with an *univerſal* Power over all Things, that, by his *over-ruling Providence*, he might order and direct them all to the Intereſt of his Church, and, accordingly, now he is in Heaven, the *Defence* and Preſervation of it is the great Buſineſs, which he intends upon Earth. There he now ſits, looking down from his Throne with a watchful Eye, to obſerve all the Motions, and trace out all the dark Deſigns of its Enemies, and thence he ſtretches forth his *almighty* Arm to *guard* and defend it againſt them. And indeed, conſidering the mighty Oppoſition, that was made againſt it from its very *Infancy*; that, for three hundred Years together, it was the conſtant Aim of all the Power and Policy, both of Men and Devils, to ſuppreſs and ruin it, and yet it ſtill encreaſed by Oppreſſion, and conquered by Suffering; we cannot but conclude, that it was all along protected by an inviſible Hand; and, to make the divine Interpoſition more remarkable, the Inſtruments of its wonderful Succeſs were ſo very mean (for (*e*) *not many wiſe Men after the Fleſh, not many Mighty, not many Noble were called)* that God may well be ſaid to *have (f) choſen the fooliſh Things of the World to confound the wiſe, and the weak Things of the World to confound the Things that are mighty.*

Defending the true Members of it.

AND as our Lord, in his *regal* Capacity, exerciſes a moſt vigilant Providence over his *Church* in general, ſo does he extend a peculiar Care and Preſervation to every true and lively Member of it. For theſe are (*g*) *his Jewels*, and therefore he keeps them, in his Treaſury, under the ſtrongeſt and moſt inviolable Security. He watches over them continually for Good; defends them, (*h*) *as the Apple of his Eye, and hides them under the Shadow of his Wings, from the wicked, that would oppreſs them, and from their deadly Enemies, who compaſs them about.* Sometimes indeed he may ſuffer them to fall into Afflictions and Diſtreſſes; but it is always with a gracious Intent, either to cure in them ſome *mental* Diſeaſe, to exerciſe ſome *paſſive* Virtue, or to *wean* them from the vain Delights of this World, and train them up for a bleſſed Eternity. Mean Time, they are not the leſs beloved by him, while they are under this State of Diſcipline, and, (*i*) *if they hold their Confidence, and the rejoicing of their Hope firm unto the End*, whenever their mortal Part ſhall be diſſolved, he will immediately ſend a *Detachment* of his *heavenly Hoſt* to conduct their ſeparate Souls into the Manſions of Reſt, that he hath provided for their Reception, and the Enjoyment of ſuch a *Degree* of Felicity, as they are capable of, until the full *Completion* of their Happineſs in a glorious Reſurrection.

Puniſhing its Perſecutors.

SUCH is the Protection, which Chriſt, as Sovereign *King*, and *Ruler* at the right Hand of God, extends to his *Church*, ſuch Care he takes of his faithful *Subjects*, and ſuch Honour have all his *Saints!* But now, on the contrary, under the Figures of *Jezabel*, (*k*) *who cut off the Prophets of the Lord*, and of (*l*) *Babylon, who made herſelf drunken with the Blood of the Saints, and with the Blood of the Martyrs*, our Lord ſignifies in what Manner he deals with the Enemies and Perſecutors of his Church, (*m*) *Babylon is fallen, is fallen*, ſays the mighty Angel, who came down from Heaven, *and is become the Habitation of Devils——And the Cage of every unclean and hateful Bird*; For (*n*) *I gave her Space to repent of her Fornications* (ſays our Lord himſelf of the other) *and ſhe repented not.* I therefore *will caſt her into a Bed*, i. e. into a bedrid and irrecoverable Condition, and *them, that commit Adultery, into great Tribulation. I will kill her Children with Death, and will give unto every one according to his Works:* and to this Purpoſe, if we look into the Records of Hiſtory, we ſhall find, that, in the *ten* great *Perſecutions* of the *Chriſtian* Church the

(*d*) Eph. i. 22. (*e*) 1 Cor. i. 26. (*f*) Ver. 27. (*g*) Mal. iii. 17. (*h*) Pſal. xvii. 8, 9.
(*i*) Heb. iii. 6. (*k*) 1 Kings xviii. 4. (*l*) Rev. xvii. 6. (*m*) Rev. xviii. 2. (*n*) Rev. ii. 21, &c.

the * *principal* Promoters and Abettors of them were, in their violent and unnatural Deaths, as well as the other Judgments, that befel them, remarkable Inſtances of divine *Vengeance*, and ſuch (*o*) as *were made to drink at the Hand of the Lord the Cup of his Fury.*

Corrupt *Churches*, *wicked* Nations, *and* particular *Sinners.*

THUS our Lord, in Virtue of that *regal* Power, which he exerciſes at the right Hand of God, does not ſuffer the *Perſecutors* of his Church to go unpuniſhed; and even his *Church* itſelf, when it comes to be *corrupt* and depraved in any Part of it, he ſometimes viſits with ſore Tribulation, which *is* (*p*) *fighting againſt it with the Sword of his Mouth*, as in the Caſe of *Pergamos*, and ſometimes with a total Deprivation of thoſe Bleſſings, which he finds neglected and deſpiſed; for (*q*) *remember*, (ſays he to the Church of *Epheſus*) *from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the firſt Works; or elſe I will come unto thee quickly, and remove thy Candleſtick out of its Place, except thou repent.* In like Manner, as he is the *Miniſter* of his Father's Providence, he has it in his Power, whenever he pleaſes, by the ſevere Diſpenſations of (*r*) *the Sword without, and the Peſtilence, and the Famine within* to lay waſte whole Nations *for the Wickedneſs of thoſe, that dwell therein*; and by *Blaſting and Mildew*, by Loſſes and Diſappointments, by Pains and Sickneſs, by (*s*) *ſending a Meſſenger of Satan to buffet him*, and by (*t*) *ſetting the Terrors of the Lord*, and his own guilty Conſcience *in aray againſt him*, to make the moſt bold and obdurate Sinner miſerable. Sometimes indeed, for wiſe and gracious Ends, he may ſpare the Workers of Iniquity in this Life, and ſhine upon them a continued Day of Proſperity, without any Cloud or Interruption; but, no ſooner ſhall this bright Scene be ſhifted, than a ſad Cataſtrophe ſhall enſue, when, in Virtue of a Warrant from Heaven, they ſhall find themſelves under the Cuſtody of ſome infernal *Officer*, and conſigned to a State of Wretchedneſs and Deſpair, therein to reflect upon their paſt Folly, and to languiſh out their Time, in the diſmal Expectation of that great and terrible Day of the Lord, (*u*) *when he ſhall be revealed from Heaven, with his mighty Angels, in flaming Fire, to take Vengeance on them, that know not God, and that obey not his Goſpel, who ſhall be puniſhed with everlaſting Deſtruction from the Preſence of the Lord, and from the Glory of his Power.* THIS

* To Inſtance only in the *Roman* Emperors: *Nero*, the Author of the *firſt* general Perſecution, being condemned by the *Senate* to die *more majorum*, i. e. to have his Head faſtened in a *Pillory*, and ſo ſcourged to Death, to avoid this Penalty, was forced to put an End to his infamous Life. *Domitian*, the *ſecond* great Perſecutor, was murdered by the chief Officers of his Court, and, by the Senate ſentenced, that *no more Honour ſhould be ſhewn at his Funeral, than was allowed to a common Ruffian. Trajan* (under whom the *third* Perſecution commenced) a Prince of ſhining Virtues, had they not been ſullied with his *Severities* againſt Chriſtians, after a remarkable Defeat of his Army, had his Life ſhortened (as himſelf imagined) by Poiſon. *Marcus Antoninus*, the beſt of *heathen* Princes, had he not been the *fourth* Perſecutor of *Chriſtians*, was poiſoned by his *Phyſicians* in Compliment to his *profligate* Son. *Caracalla*, the chief Abettor of the *fifth* Perſecution, was aſſaſſinated by one of his chief *Commanders*, while he was retired to eaſe Nature. *Maximinus*, the *ſixth* Perſecutor, was, together with his Son, murdered by his own Soldiers, who ſent their Heads to the Senate at *Rome*, but left their Bodies to be devoured by Dogs, and Birds of Prey. *Decius*, the cruel Promoter of the *ſeventh* Perſecution (in whoſe Reign an *Inundation* of *Goths*, and other *Barbarians* ſeems by Providence to have been brought upon the Empire to revenge the Blood of Chriſtians) died miſerably in a *Bog*, or deep *Lake*, into which he rode furiouſly in Deſperation. *Valerian*, the *eighth* moſt bloody Perſecutor of all, was by *Sapores*, King of *Perſia*, taken Priſoner, and carried into his own Country, where he made him bow down his *Neck* for him to tread on, as oft as he mounted his Horſe, and after ſeven Years Servitude of this Kind, cauſed his Eyes to be *put out*, and his Body to be *flead* alive. *Diocleſian*, who, by the Inſtigation of *Galerius*, began the *ninth* Perſecution, was by him depoſed; and *Galerius*, when he came to the Empire, and had, for ſome Time, carried on the *tenth* and laſt Perſecution with the utmoſt Cruelty, was, at laſt, ſtricken with an intolerable Diſeaſe, which, by ingendring *Worms*, and other *Vermin* in his Bowels, and *ſecret* Parts, occaſioned a *Stench* too noiſome, and Pains too exquiſite to be born, and, in this miſerable Condition, he died; while *Maximin*, another barbarous Promoter of *this* Perſecution, in the deſperate State of his Affairs, took *Poiſon*, which gave him ſuch intolerable Pain, that he ran his Head againſt the Wall with ſuch Fury, as made his Eyes ſtart out of their Places, and, in this Condition, calling upon *Jeſus*, and acknowledging the *Juſtice* of what he ſuffered, as a due Puniſhment of his *Rancor* againſt *Chriſtianity*, he breathed out his Soul in the moſt dreadful Manner imaginable. *Echard*'s Eccl. Hiſt.

(*o*) Iſa. li. 17. (*p*) Rev. ii. 16. (*q*) Ver. 5. (*r*) Ezek. vii. 15. (*s*) 2 Cor. xii. 7. (*t*) Job vi. 4. (*u*) 2 Theſſ. i. 7, &c.

The Recapitulation, *and* Uses *of the whole.*

THIS I think is enough for the *Exposition* of the *sixth* Article of our Creed, *he ascended into Heaven, and sitteth on the right Hand of God, the Father Almighty*, wherein we profess to believe, "that, "in Conformity to the Types and Prophecies concerning the *Messias*, and pursuant to what himself had frequently "foretold, our *Lord* did not only arise "from the Dead, but, after a stay of "*forty Days* upon Earth, in a full Company of his *Disciples*, all surrounding, "and beholding him, did actually ascend, "from Mount *Olivet*, into Heaven, in "the same *natural* Body, wherein he was "*crucified*, though greatly refined and "*spiritualized* by the Power of his Resurrection: That he ascended in a *visible* and triumphant Manner, attended "by his mighty *Angels*, through all the "Regions of the Air, through all the "*celestial* Orbs, until he came into the "*Heaven of Heavens*, and the most glorious Presence of the Majesty of God: "That there, in Recompence of his *meritorious* Performances, he was seated, in "his *human* Nature, on the right Hand "of the Throne of God, where he now "abides, and for ever will abide, in full "Possession of the highest Power, Dignity, "and Dominion: that there, under God "the Father, he exercises a sovereign Rule "and Authority, protects and defends his "*Church*, defeats and destroys its Enemies, "rewards the *loyal*, and punishes the *rebellious* Subjects of his Kingdom; and that "there assisting and purifying our weak "and unhallowed Prayers by the Addition "of his own, before they reach the divine "Ear, he is our *Advocate with the Father*, "*he liveth for ever to make Intercession for "us:* And the proper Effect and Influence "of all this is—to confirm our *Faith*, that "the Saviour, in whom we trust, is in "reality the eternal Son of God; to excite "our *Joy* for the Honour and high Advancement of our Nature in his Person; "to afford us *Consolation*, in that we have "so good a Friend in so high a Place "and Power engaged in our Interest; "to repose our *Trust* and Confidence in "his Willingness to hear, and Ability "to assist us; to revive our *Hope* of that "blessed Immortality, which he, in our "Nature, has taken Possession of; to encourage our *Obedience*, since we, together with him, shall reap the Fruit of "our Labour (*x*) *if we be not weary in "Well-doing*; to raise our *Affections* from "the Earth, whence he is ascended, to "those Things, that are above, where he "sitteth at God's right Hand; and, lastly, "(since (*y*) *of him, and through him, and "to him are all Things) through him* alone "to address our Petitions to the *Throne of "Grace*; *of him* to make the Anchor of our "Hope in all our Distresses; and *to him* to "render the same Honour and Homage, "that we do to the Father, or, in the Phrase "of the *Psalmist*, to (*z*) kiss *the Son, lest "he be angry, and so we perish from the "right Way: If his Wrath be kindled "(yea but a little) blessed are all they, that "put their Trust in him.*"

(*x*) 2 Thess. iii. 13. (*y*) Rom. xi. 36. (*z*) Psal. ii. 12.

CHAP. VII. SECT. I.

ARTICLE VII.

From thence he * shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

The EXPOSITION.

AFTER the *Creed* has seated our blessed Saviour at *the right Hand of God*, in what *Character* he resides there, and what the *Offices* are, that, as our *Mediator*, he executes; how he *intercedes* for us as our *High Priest*, and *rules* us, as our *Sovereign*, *chastizes* the Enemies, *rewards* the loyal, and *punishes* the rebellious Subjects of his Kingdom; of this it makes no Mention, but, referring us to the sacred Oracles for our Instruction therein, proceeds to the last Instance or Completion of our Lord's *Exaltation* in his triumphant Return from Heaven, where now he dwells, to visit the Earth once more, and to judge all Mankind, whether living or dead.

That the Messias *was to come* twice *from Heaven.*

THE different Characters, under which the Prophets have represented that eminent Person, who was to come into the World, sometimes as one under great Tribulation, Affliction, and Distress, and sometimes as a mighty Prince, and Conqueror, that had (*a*) *all his Enemies under his Feet, and was able to dash them in Pieces like a Potter's Vessel*, have given Occasion to the *Jewish* Conceit of a *double Messias*, one the Son of *Joseph*, of the Tribe of *Ephraim*, who was to *suffer*, and the other the Son of *David*, of the Tribe of *Judah*, who was to rule over them, and vanquish all their Enemies: To the one they apply the Prophecy of *Zechariah*, (*b*) *behold thy King cometh unto thee, lowly, and riding on an Ass*, and to the other, that pompous Description in *Daniel*, (*c*) *behold one like the Son of Man came in the Clouds of Heaven*; whereas both Predictions relate to one and the same *Person* (as their *Interpreters* of old were wont to acknowledge) but as they cannot both belong to one and the same *Advent*, it must thence necessarily follow, that the promised *Messias* was twice to come from Heaven; first, in a State of the lowest *Humiliation*, when he was to *suffer* for the Sins of the World, and, secondly, in the highest *Splendor* and Magnificence, when he was to *judge* it, according to that *ancient* Prophecy, ascribed to *Enoch*, and applied to him, (*d*) *the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his Saints*, or holy Angels, *to execute Judgment, and to convince all, that are ungodly, of their wicked Deeds and Words.*

That our Lord did the same.

THAT our blessed Lord at his first *Advent*, did fully accomplish the former of these great Ends, and, after he had *died for our Sins, and rose again for our Justification*,

* The Author of *the History of the Apostles Creed* is of Opinion, that this whole *Article* was introduced, as an *Antidote* against two Sorts of *Hereticks*, the *Marcionites*, and the *Gnosticks* of several Denominations, the *former* of which *blasphemed* the *Judge*, by affirming, that he never intended to *punish* the wicked, and the *latter subverted* the *Judgment* itself, by pretending, that Men were not *voluntary*, but *necessary* Agents; and, consequently, neither liable to be judged, nor capable of Rewards and Punishments. But had this been the Case (as others argue) the Compilers of the *Creed* would have certainly expressed their Opposition to these *Heresies*, if not in *more* Words, yet, at least, in such, as would have been more *direct* to these Points. The *Jews* and *Gentiles*, who believed a *Judgment* to come, were ignorant of the Person, who was to execute it, least of all did they suppose, that *Jesus* of *Nazareth*, who was despised when living, and suffered Death on the *Cross*, was to be exalted to this great Authority. As therefore the *Makers* of the Creed did teach the *Catechumens* to profess, that *Jesus Christ ascended into Heaven, sitteth on God's right Hand, and from thence shall come to judge the quick and the dead*, in plain general Terms; so we cannot but think, that they intended this Confession for those, who either as yet denied, or were absolutely ignorant of these Things, i. e. for the *Jews* and *Gentiles*, converted to the Christian Faith: But, as there were all along such Converts as these, from the first Beginning of Christianity, this Article must therefore be *originally* in the Creed, and, as contained in the Apostles Writings, of *apostolick* Institution. *King*'s Hist. and *Grabe*'s Notes on Bp. *Bull*'s Judgment.

(*a*) Psal. ii. 9. (*b*) Zech. ix. 9. (*c*) Dan. vii. 13. (*d*) Jude ver. 14, 15.

fication, did viſibly aſcend up into Heaven, the preceding Articles, in their *Expoſition*, have ſufficiently evinced; and that, in the *Fulneſs of Time*, he is to return from Heaven again, in Order to execute the other important *Office*, of judging the World, the Teſtimony of Scripture is more full and copious in Reſpect of this great *Article*, than any other. For, when we find our Lord, a little before his *Paſſion*, promiſing his Apoſtles, (*e*) *if I go, and prepare a Place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myſelf, that where I am, ye may be alſo*, and, at his *Arraignment*, telling the *High Prieſt*, that (*f*) *hereafter the Son of Man ſhould be ſeen, ſitting on the right Hand of Power, and* * *coming in the Clouds of Heaven*: When we find the *Angels* aſſuring the Spectators of his *Aſcenſion*, that (*g*) *the ſame Jeſus, who was taken up from them into Heaven, would ſo come, in like Manner, as they had ſeen him go into Heaven*, and the beloved Apoſtle, in his *prophetick* Viſion, declaring, (*h*) *behold he cometh with the Clouds, and every Eye ſhall ſee him, and they alſo, who pierced him*, we cannot but conclude, that at a certain Time, which God, in his great Wiſdom, has determined the Lord *Jeſus* ſhall again *be revealed from Heaven*, (*i*) *to judge the World in Righteouſneſs, and to miniſter true Judgment unto the People*, by making an eternal Diſcrimination (*k*) *between the righteous and the wicked, between him, that ſerveth God, and him, that ſerveth him not.*

In order to judge *the World.*

THAT this is the great End and Buſineſs of his coming, the Scripture has taken Care to inform us by ſundry *Alluſions*, as well as expreſs Declarations. For when it repreſents him, in a *parabolical* Dreſs, as an Huſbandman, (*l*) ſeparating the *Wheat*, ſometimes from the *Chaff*, and ſometimes from *the Tares*; as (*m*) a *Bridegroom*, receiving the *wiſe*, and excluding the *fooliſh Virgins*; as (*n*) a Maſter, diſtinguiſhing the *Servants* of his Family, rewarding the good, and puniſhing the *unprofitable*; and as (*o*) a *Shepherd, dividing his Sheep from the Goats, and placing the one on the right Hand, and the other on the left*: When more directly it tells us, that (*p*) *God hath appointed a Day, in which he will judge the World in Righteouſneſs, by that Man, whom he hath ordained, and whereof he hath given us Aſſurance, in that he hath raiſed him from the dead*; and therefore (*q*) *he hath commanded us to preach unto the People, and to teſtify, that it is he, who was ordained of God to be the Judge both of the quick and dead, at his appearing*: When more *fully ſtill it aſſures us, that* (*r*) *we muſt all appear before the judgment Seat of Chriſt, that every one may receive the Things done in his Body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad*; For (*s*) *the Father judgeth no Man, but hath committed all Judgment unto the Son*, and for this Reaſon hath given him Authority to *execute Judgment, becauſe he is the Son of Man*, *i. e.* becauſe he dutifully complied with his Father's Will, in condeſcending to clothe himſelf in human Nature, and therein to become a Sacrifice for the Sins of the World: when the Scripture, I ſay, acquaints us with theſe, and many more Particulars to the like Purpoſe, we cannot but be convinced of the *Truth* of this Propoſition, that the great Affair of judging the World, and of determining the final eternal Fate of all Mankind, is to be tranſacted by our Redeemer, and that not only in his *divine*, but in his *human* Nature likewiſe, for (*t*) *worthy is he to take the* Book of Judgment, *and to open the Seals thereof, becauſe he was ſlain, and has redeemed us to God by his Blood, out of every Kindred, and Tongue, and People, and Nation.*

AND

* That, in this very Manner, the *Jews* do expect the coming of the *Meſſias*, is evident, from that *Gloſs* of one of their *ancient* Maſters on this Prophecy of *Daniel*, which *Raimund. Pug. Fid.* thus explains: *If ever the Jews deſerve, that the Meſſias ſhould come, he ſhall come glorioufly, according to the Prophet* Daniel, *i. e. in the Clouds of Heaven*; and then he tells us farther, *that therefore do the modern* Jews *ſay, that the* Meſſias *is not yet come, becauſe they never ſaw him coming in the Clouds of Heaven.* And it ſeems very probable, that the great Offence, which the *High Prieſt* took at our Saviour's ſaying, that *they ſhould hereafter ſee him coming in the Clouds of Heaven* was this——that it was a Tradition among them, that the *Meſſias* ſhould ſo come, and that therefore he looked upon that Saying of our Saviour's, as a *blaſphemous* Pretence to his being the *Meſſias*. *Scot's* Mediator.

(*e*) John xiv. 3. (*f*) Matt. xxvi. 64. (*g*) Acts i. 11. (*h*) Rev. i. 7. (*i*) Pſal. ix. 8.
(*k*) Mal. iii. 18. (*l*) Matt. xiii. 30. (*m*) Matt. xxv. 10. (*n*) Matt. xxv. 19, &c.
(*o*) Matt. xxv. 31, &c. (*p*) Acts xvii. 31. (*q*) Acts x. 42. (*r*) 2 Cor. v. 10.
(*s*) John v. 27. (*t*) Rev. v. 9.

The Reaſons for his judging it, as he was Man.

AND fit indeed it was, and highly conſonant to the Juſtice of God, that he, who had *humbled* himſelf to ſuch a Degree, ſhould be thus eminently *exalted*, he, who was *deſpiſed*, and rejected of *Men*, ſhould be honoured, and attended on by *Angels*; he, who was arraigned, and condemned by the Powers of the World, ſhould have Authority to ſummon all, Princes, and Potentates, Kings, and Judges of the Earth, to appear at his *Bar*, and receive their Sentence from his Mouth; that his *Crucifiers* ſhould look on him with an aſtoniſhed Eye, and the *Jews* be forced to acknowledge that *Majeſty*, they had ſo groſsly abuſed, and ſo obſtinately denied. This is the Triumph of the Holy Jeſus; this is the Reward [whom they murdered,] of his Infamy and Death; and a proper Reward it is, to make him the Judge of all the World, who, *when in the Fleſh*, was an Object of Contempt, and treated with ſuch Indignity. Fit it was, and a ſure Demonſtration of the Mercy and Goodneſs of God, to appoint him to be our Judge, who, by aſſuming our Nature, is acquainted with our *Frailties*, and therefore cannot (*u*) *but have Compaſſion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the Way*; and, having himſelf been *compaſſed with Infirmity* and (*x*) *in all Points tempted, like as we are, but without Sin*, will, no Doubt, temper his judicial Proceeding againſt us with all the Equity, nay, with all the Lenity [and Compaſſion,] that the Nature and Circumſtances of our Crimes will admit.

HE will not judge us, as if we (*y*) were Angels or unbodied Saints, but will remember that we are Men, that we are the Race of apoſtate Man, that we have a corrupt Nature *within*, a tempting World, and a tempting Devil without, and will take all the Difficulties, wherewith we are ſurrounded, into his merciful Conſideration, in order to make favourable Allowances for our Faults. Laſtly, fit it was, and greatly conducive to the Solemnity of this grand Inqueſt, that it ſhould be tranſacted in a publick and viſible Manner, that ſo all the World might know for what *Offences* they were called to an Account, by what *Mouth* their Sentence was pronounced, by what *Hand* their Doom executed, and in the whole Proceſs, be forced to acknowledge, that (*z*) *juſt and righteous are thy Ways, O Lord, thou King of Saints, for thy Judgments are made manifeſt*: Whereas, were not the Judgment of the laſt Day to be made manifeſt and viſible, the Workers of Iniquity, for ought we know, might go into *Hell*, the ſame *Atheiſts* and *Unbelievers* that they were on *Earth*. They might curſe their hard Fate perhaps, but yet be never the nearer to acknowledge the Righteouſneſs of God in their Condemnation, and to accuſe themſelves as the *ſole* Authors of their own Miſery and Deſtruction.

THUS, in Reſpect of his Affinity to our Nature, his Senſe of our Infirmities, and his Viſibility to our Eyes, our bleſſed Lord, as he is the *Son of Man*, is the only Perſon in the ſacred *Trinity* that is qualified to aſcend the great Tribunal, and to make the Proceedings of that Day in any Degree ſupportable, by repreſenting ((*a*) as one expreſſes it) the greateſt Mildneſs and Sweetneſs of Mercy in the Severity of a juſt and irreſpective Judgment: But then, to enable him to diſcharge this Office more compleatly, it was requiſite that he ſhould likewiſe be the *Son of God*, and equal to the Father in every *eſſential* Perfection, as well as the *Son of Man*. For, ſince in this Life, Vice is ſo apt to ſneak into *Corners*, and to hide itſelf from every Eye, but that of God, and the vileſt Actions paſs ſometimes *unobſerved*, are ſometimes *coloured* over with fair Pretences, and ſometimes quite *concealed* under the Maſque of *Hypocriſy*; ſince falſe *Characters* are every where impoſed upon the Multitude, the *Virtues* of many are blackened and traduced and the good Deeds of others, being done in private, are too modeſt to bear the Light: Since the *Spring* of all Actions indeed, and that which gives them their true Quality, lies hid and undiſcovered, in the loweſt Receſſes of the *Heart*, which no human Knowledge has Power to penetrate; and ſince, to determine whether they be good or bad, and in what *Proportion* they are ſo (*b*) the *Complexion* of the Man's Body, and the *Temper* of his Mind, the Inclination or *Reluctance* of his Will, and, above all, the *Principle*, from whence they proceeded, and whether Religion, Generoſity, and good Nature, or Intereſt, bodily Conſtitution, and Vanity were

And as he was God.

(*u*) Heb. v. 2. (*x*) Heb. iv. 15. (*y*) *Sherlock* of Judgment. (*z*) Rev. xv. 3, 4.
(*a*) *Pearſon.* (*b*) *Collier's* Ser.

were the chief *Motives* of them. Theſe are all to be fully enquired into, and critically adjuſted, before the World can be judged in Righteouſneſs, and every one *rewarded according to his Works:* But now who can be ſufficient for this great Province? None certainly, but he, who has an *all comprehending* Mind, able to take a Proſpect of univerſal Nature at once, and to keep an exact Account of all Things relating to human Affairs, none but he, who (*c*) *needeth not that any ſhould teſtify of Man, for he knoweth what is in Man,* (*d*) *he trieth the Heart,* and (*e*) *ſearcheth out the Reins,* and (*f*) *underſtandeth our Thoughts afar off*; for (*g*) *all Things are naked and open to him, with whom we have to do*, and therefore the Apoſtle's Exhortation is——(*h*) *judge nothing before the Time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to Light the hidden Things of Darkneſs, and will make manifeſt the Counſels of the Heart, and then ſhall every Man,* as he deſerves, *have Praiſe,* or Condemnation from Almighty *God.*

The Time, WHEN *this great and terrible Day of the Lord is* to come, thoſe, who have pretended * to *prognoſticate*, have been ſo unſucceſsful in their Conjectures, that we may juſtly ſay, (*i*) *it is not for us to know the Times, and the Seaſons, which the Father has put in his own Power.* Our Saviour himſelf hath poſitively declared, that (*k*) *of that Day and Hour knoweth no Man, no not the Angels, which are in Heaven, neither the Son, but the Father only,* and therefore all Diſquiſitions concerning this *Secret*, which God for the wiſeſt Reaſons (that Men might *watch*, and be always *ready*) hath thought fit to reſerve to himſelf, are mere *Preſumption*, and the Iſſue of them muſt prove *Folly.*

And Signs of it. BUT though we are not allowed to know when the Day, appointed for the general Judgment, will come upon the World, yet our Lord has given us ſufficient Intimation, what are to be the *Signs* and *Forerunners* of it. For, when his *Diſciples*, who ſeem to have had a Notion, that the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem* and the Diſſolution of the World would both happen about the ſame Time, came to their Maſter (then ſitting on the *Mount of Olives* in full Proſpect of the City and Temple) and enquired of him, (*l*) *what ſhould be the Sign of his coming, and of the End of the World?* As they put the Queſtion concerning both theſe Events, ſo he gives them ſuch *Signs* and Tokens, as were not only *common* to both, but ſome of them likewiſe *proper* and peculiar to each of them. Error and Impoſture, falſe Prophets, and falſe Chriſts, great Wickedneſs, and Corruption of Manners, Perſecutions, Tumults, and Wars, Famines, Peſtilences, and Earthquakes, † the Sun, Moon, and Stars obſcured,

(*c*) John ii. 25. (*d*) 1 Theſſ. ii. 4. (*e*) Rev. ii. 23. (*f*) Pſ. cxxxix. 2. (*g*) Heb. iv. 13.
(*h*) 1 Cor. iv. 5. (*i*) Acts i. 7. (*k*) Matt. xxiv. 36. (*l*) Matt. xxiv. 3.

* It was a general Opinion of the *primitive* Fathers and Chriſtians, that, in their Time, the final Judgment was near at hand; but none of them were ever known to name the *particular* Year, or Day, when it was to happen, as ſome *Enthuſiaſts*, of much later Date, have adventured to do, and ſo deceived both themſelves, and others, with their groundleſs *Dreams.* To mention but two Inſtances out of many. A *Dutch* Miniſter, near *Noremburg*, having ſome Skill in *arithmetical Calculations*, perſuaded himſelf, and moſt of his Pariſh, that the End of the World would be in 1562; and was bold enough to name the very Day, and Hour, when Chriſt would come to Judgment. At the Day and Hour appointed, they all met together to hear their *Prophet* preach, and to wait for Chriſt's coming; when, all on a ſudden, there happened ſuch a violent Storm of *Thunder* and *Lightning*, that, every Moment, they expected, when their Saviour ſhould appear; but, the Day clearing up, and no Saviour coming, they fell foul upon the poor *Prieſt*, and would doubtleſs have murdered him on the Spot, had it not been for the Interpoſition of ſome of a little more *Moderation*, who helped him to get off. Another Prophet of the like Complexion was a *Scotch* Gentleman, who, having publiſhed a Commentary on the *Revelation* in 1593, confined the End of the World to *ninety two Years* after that Publication, and therefore made it fall in 1685, later, than he could poſſibly live; which gave Occaſion to Mr. *Owen*, his Countryman, to write an Epigram upon him, which I find thus *engliſhed.*

Ninety two Years the World, as yet, ſhall ſtand,
If it muſt ſtand or fall by your Command.
'Twas wiſely done, to ſet its Fall ſo high,
Leſt, e're you dy'd, you might be found to lye.

† St. *Jerom* tells us of an ancient *Tradition* of the *Jewiſh* Doctors (to which our Saviour in theſe Predictions might poſſibly refer) that, "for *fifteen* Days together, before the general Judgment, there ſhall be "tranſacted, upon the *Stage* of Nature, a continued *Scene* of fearful Signs and Wonders. The *Sea* ſhall "ſwell to a prodigious Height, and make a fearful Noiſe with its tumbling Waves; the *Heavens* ſhall crack,

ſcured, and diſordered, and *the Powers of Heaven all ſhaken*; theſe were the Forerunners of the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, and theſe, (though in a more eminent and amazing Manner) will precede the final Diſſolution of all Things. But, what are the *peculiar* and more immediate Signs of that ſtupendous Event are the *three*, that he ſpecifies, (*m*) the * *Sign of the Son of Man* appearing in Heaven, the Angels, *with a loud Voice*, alarming the World, and proclaiming his coming, and at the Sound of † *the Trump of God*, the Dead riſing out of their Graves, and making themſelves ready for the general Audit.

The Manner of our Lord's coming to Judgment.

To form ſome Notion then of this great and awful Appearance, let us imagine, that, the Day appointed for this univerſal Judgment being come, we ſaw our bleſſed Saviour (*n*) riſing from his *Imperial* Seat, at his Father's right Hand, and, in a Body of pure and immaculate *Splendor*, with its Eyes ſparkling with Beams of *Majeſty*, and its whole Subſtance ſhedding forth from the *Deity*, that inhabits it, a dazling *Glory* round about it, placing himſelf upon a bright and radiant *Cloud* formed into the Faſhion of a *large Tribunal*, and ſo beginning his ſolemn and triumphant Proceſſion: Imagine we behold all the *Court* of Heaven coming out to attend him, *ten thouſand* of his Saints, with Crowns of Glory on their Heads, and Songs and Hallelujahs in their Mouths, and *Myriads* of Holy Angels, all ranged in their *hierarchal* Order, and appearing in their *Robes of State*; and, at the Head of them, one more *mighty*, and more glorious than the reſt, with his *ſhrill Trumpet* ringing a *Peal* of Thunder through the *Univerſe*, at which the *Earth* trembles and ſhakes, the *Graves* are opened, and the *dead* ariſe, and thoſe, that are *alive* at that Time, are all in *a Moment, in the twinkling of an Eye changed*, and inveſted with new Powers of Spirituality and Incorruption: Imagine, I ſay, we ſaw our Saviour coming in that awful Pomp, wherein the Prophet *Daniel* has deſcribed him, (*o*) *ſitting on a Throne, like the fiery Flame, and its Wheels as burning Fire, with a Stream of Fire iſſuing out from before him, and thouſand thouſands miniſtring unto him, and ten thouſand Times ten thouſand ſtanding before him*; and, as he approached the Earth, to fix his Tribunal at a convenient Diſtance, the *Trumpet* ſtill ſounding louder and louder to ſummons all Mankind to appear before it, (*p*) *while the Kings of the Earth, and the great Men, and the rich Men, and the chief Captains, and the mighty Men—and every bond Man, and every free Man are ſeeking to hide themſelves*

(*m*) Matt. xxiv. 30. (*n*) *Scot*'s Mediator. (*o*) Dan. vii. 9, 10. (*p*) Rev. vi. 15.

" crack, Day and Night, with loud and roaring *Thunders*; the *Earth* ſhall groan under hideous *Convulſi-*
" *ons*, and be ſhaken with *quotidian Earthquakes*; the *Moon* ſhall ſhed forth purple Streams of diſcoloured
" Light; the *Sun* ſhall be clothed in a diſmal *Darkneſs*; and the *Stars* ſhall twinkle, like expiring Candles in
" the *Socket*; the *Air* ſhall blaze with portentous *Comets*, and the whole *Frame* of Nature, like a *funeral*
" *Room*, ſhall all be hung round with Mourning, and Enſigns of Horror, and then ſhall the Inhabitants of
" the Earth bewail themſelves, and the *Sinners of Sion* ſhall be horribly afraid, when they ſhall be forewarn-
" ed, by theſe aſhoniſhing *Portents*, of the near Approach of *their everlaſting Doom.*" *Scot*'s Mediator.

* The *Moderns*, by this *Phænomenon*, underſtand, ſome of them, the *Cloud*, wherein our Lord ſhall return to Judgment; others, the Sound of the *Trumpet*, which the *Latins* call *Signum*, and the *Greeks* by a like Name: and others *Chriſt himſelf*, as it is in St. *Luke*, xxi. 27. But the *Ancients*, both of the *Eaſtern*, and *Weſtern* Churches, made no Manner of Doubt, but that it was the *Sign of the Croſs*, which our Lord vouchſafed to ſhew from Heaven to *Conſtantine* the Great; (as *Euſebius* relates,) and which at that Day (as the Fathers love to ſpeak) will *ſhine from Eaſt to Weſt, more gloriouſly than the Sun itſef.* And indeed what can we conceive more *honourable* to our Lord, or fuller of *Terror* to his Enemies, than that the *Croſs* of Chriſt, which they counted *Fooliſhneſs*, nay eſteemed the greateſt Obloquy to the Chriſtian Faith, ſhould, at that Day, be made the *Forerunner*, to proclaim his coming, and call all Nations of the World to appear before him? *Edwards*'s Body Vol. I. and *Heylyn* on the Creed.

† I ſee no Reaſon, why this ſhould not be underſtood *literally*, of an *audible* Sound, like that of a *Trumpet*, though proceeding from no other *Inſtrument*, than that of the *Arch-Angel*'s Mouth. For if God, when he gave the Law, deſcended on Mount *Sinai*, *with the Voice of a Trumpet ſounding loud, ſo that all the People, that were in the Camp, trembled*, Exod. xix. 16. it ſeems to give Awe and Solemnity to our Lord's Appearance, to have his coming to Judgment proclaimed by ſuch a Sound. But then together with this Sound, or Voice of the *Arch-Angel*, there ſhall proceed from Chriſt a *divine Power*, even his *holy Spirit*, by which he raiſed himſelf from the dead, and by which the *Materials* of all Bodies, which are now ſcattered about the World, ſhall be gathered up, re-united, and re-organized. For, *if the Spirit of him* (ſays the Apoſtle) *that raiſed up Jeſus from the dead, dwell in us, he, that raiſed up Chriſt from the dead, ſhall alſo quicken our mortal Bodies, by his Spirit, that dwelleth in us*, Rom. viii. 11. *Sherlock* of Judgment and *Scot*'s Mediator.

themſelves in the Dens, and in the Rocks of the Mountains, and ſaying to the Mountains and Rocks, fall on us, and hide us from the Face of him that ſitteth on the Throne, and from the Wrath of the Lamb, for the great Day of his Wrath is come, and who ſhall be able to ſtand? Imagine we ſaw all this, I ſay, and then we may have ſome Conception of what our Saviour means, when he tells us, that he is to (*q*) *come in his own Glory, and in his Father's, and in that of the holy Angels.*

The Vaſtneſs *of the Aſſembly,*

THE Judge, being thus ſeated at a proper Diſtance from the Earth, all the Inhabitants of it (which the Creed, in Conformity to Scripture, expreſſes by *the quick and the Dead*) *i. e.* thoſe, who ſhall be found alive at the Day of Judgment, and thoſe, who have died or ſhall die, in all Ages of the World, before that Day come, being ſummoned to appear before it, and forced to obey the Call, none ſo great is to be excuſed, none ſo mean as to be overlooked, but every one, in his proper Perſon, of what Sex or Age, of what Rank or Quality, of what Country or Nation ſoever, high and low, rich and poor, young and old, good and bad, one with another, *all* in ſhort, and *all at* once compelled to appear together, what an inconceivably vaſt Aſſembly muſt this needs make? For if the *Rendezvous* of one Generation only, if it could collect and ſhew them all together, would make a wonderful Appearance, ſuch as mortal Eye never ſaw, nor could be able to behold without Terror and Amazement, how aſtoniſhing muſt the Sight be of all the Sons and Daughters of *Adam*, who, from the firſt Creation, to the final Period of the World, have ever lived, or ever ſhall live upon the Face of the Earth, when, with an innumerable Company of angelick Beings, both good and bad, they ſhall meet, and aſſemble together before the *Judgment Seat of Chriſt?*

And the Form *of his judging both the* Righteous,

ALL Nations being thus aſſembled together, the Method of his judiciary Proceeding, according to what we may gather from Scripture, will be this.—By the Miniſtry of his Angels, he will *ſeparate them one from another, as a Shepherd divideth his Sheep from the Goats*, and having placed the Good on the *right*, and the Bad on the *left* Hand, then ſhall * *the* (*r*) *Books be opened, out of which they are to be judged according to their Works.* The Precedency however is to be given to the *former*, and they called to Judgment firſt, when (*s*) the *Innocence* and Integrity of their Lives ſhall be fully *vindicated*, and all the *Scandal* and Aſperſions, caſt upon them, *wiped* off, in the Preſence of Saints and Angels; when all thoſe *brave* and unaffected Acts of *ſecret* Piety and Charity, to which, none but God and themſelves were conſcious, ſhall be brought into open Light, and proclaimed in the whole Aſſembly; when the *Impartiality* of the Judge, in proportioning their Rewards to the Meaſure of their Virtues, ſhall be made ſo manifeſt, that every one ſhall be convinced, that he is only ſo many Degrees *inferior* to others in Glory, as they are *ſuperior* to him in ſpiritual Graces and Perfections; and when, to make the Diſplay of the divine Mercy and Goodneſs more conſpicuous in the Forgiveneſs of the Sins, their great and gracious Judge ſhall juſt read over the ſeveral Items of them, and then cancel them for ever.

THE Judge, having thus, in the Trial of the Righteous, manifeſted the divine *Mercy*, his own *Impartiality*, and their *Sincerity* and Uprightneſs, will ariſe out of his refulgent Throne, and, with an audible Voice, and ſmiling Majeſty pronounce their Sentence, in theſe, or ſuch like Words as theſe, (*t*) *Come, ye bleſſed Children of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the Beginning of the World*, at which kind Invitation they will all immediately take wing together, and fly aloft into the Air ſinging and exulting as they go (*u*) *to meet* their

* The *opening of the Books* ſeems to be an *Alluſion* to the Form of Proceſs in human *Judicature*; for we cannot think, that God keeps Books of *Record* in a *literal* Senſe, as Men do, for ſuch Books are only helps to Memory, and therefore God needs them not: But this repreſents to us the *exact* and impartial Juſtice of the laſt Judgment; in which Senſe there are *two Sorts* of Books, which ſhall then be opened, and out of which we ſhall then be judged, firſt, the Laws of God, which are the *Rule* of our Actions, by which we ſhall be judged, and ſecondly, the *Records* of our Lives and Actions, which contain the *Matters of Fact*, or that, for which we ſhall be judged. *Sherlock* on Judgment.

(*q*) Luke ix. 26. (*r*) Rev. xx. 12. (*s*) *Scot*'s Mediator. (*t*) Matt. xxv. 34. (*u*) 1 Theſſ. iv. 17.

their dear Redeemer *in the Clouds, and ſo ſhall be for ever with him.*

And the Wicked. WHEN the mutual *Congratulations*, which we may ſuppoſe upon this joyful Occaſion, are over, the Judge having reaſſumed his Throne, and going now upon the *Trial* of the Wicked, will place the Saints all about him in ſhining Circles, that, as (*x*) *his Aſſeſſors*, they may bear a Part in this moſt dreadful Inquiſition, when (*y*) *nothing is ſecret, that ſhall not be made manifeſt, neither any Thing hid, that ſhall not be known, and come abroad*; (*z*) when Light ſhall be ſtruck into all the Works of *Darkneſs*, through all the Receſſes of *Subtilty*, through all the Diſguiſes of *Hypocriſy*; when the Maſque ſhall be pulled off from all *diſſembling* Virtues, and Vice appear in its proper *Colour*, when their ſecret Machinations, their hidden Frauds and Cheats, their lewd Imaginations, and other Abominations of their Hearts, ſhall be ſo laid open, and expoſed to the View of Men and Angels, that their own *Shame*, and *Rack* of Conſcience will force them to confeſs the Crimes charged upon them, and to proclaim themſelves guilty; whereupon their righteous Judge, who is too *great* to be overawed, too *juſt* to be bribed, and too much *provoked*, to be intreated, will, with a ſtern Look, and terrible Voice, pronounce * that dreadful Doom upon them, (*a*) *depart from me, ye curſed, into everlaſting Fire, prepared for the Devil and his Angels*; and immediately, after this Sentence, an everlaſting Fire ſhall be kindled round about them, a Fire, which, within a few Moments, ſhall ſpread itſelf over all the lower World, and convert the whole *Atmoſphere* about them into one continued *Furnace*; ſo that, having no *Retreat* left them, no *Avenue* to eſcape out of this *burning* World, theſe miſerable Creatures muſt remain, for ever ſurrounded with Smoak, and Fire, and Darkneſs, and wraped up in fierce and mercileſs Flames, which will always be preying upon them, but never conſume them. (*b*) *This is the ſecond Death.*

The OBJECTION.

" BUT, before we pronounce ſo *ſevere-*
" *ly*, we ſhould be well aſſured, that
" God hath decreed to judge, and deſtroy
" the World in this tremendous Man-
" ner. He hath threatened indeed ſo to
" do; but between *Threatnings* and *Pro-*
" *miſes*, there is this remarkable Differ-
" ence, that (*c*) he, who *promiſes*, paſſes
" over a Right to another, and is oblig-
" ed in *Juſtice* to make good his Pro-
" miſes; whereas he, who *threatens*, has
" ſtill the Power of *Execution* in his own
" Hand, and may remit the *whole*, or
" what Part of the Puniſhment, he pleaſes,
" becauſe in ſo doing, he is not *worſe*,
" but *better* than his Word. Though
" therefore God, to ſecure the Obſervance
" of his Laws, might threaten Mankind
" with great and terrible Things at the
" Day of Judgment, yet, as it is ſtill in
" his Power, either to *inflict*, or with-
" hold them, without doing any Injury
" to any one, it is wholly left to his Wiſ-
" dom, what he will do in this Affair;
" and if he ſhould forbear the Inflıction,
" no Body can find Fault, or complain
" of any Wrong or Injuſtice done him.
" And indeed, if we conſider the *Great-*
" *neſs*

* *Dreadful* it may well be called, ſince every Word in it breaths Woe and Miſery. For *to depart* imports the Infelicity of an *exiled* Perſon, forced to a Place, where he dreads to go, and whence he covets to be releaſed. To *depart from Chriſt* is to loſe all Hope of future Happineſs, which, when they ſee the righteous advanced to, the wicked will be ſenſible they have loſt by their own Fault, and this will not a little augment their Grief. To be ſent from the Fountain of Bliſs with a *Curſe* repreſents Wretchedneſs without *Commiſeration*, which is the Height of Miſery; and *into everlaſting Fire*, cannot include leſs, than *Torment* in Extremity and Perpetuity; *prepared* to be in Readineſs, and made up of the moſt *ſharp* and poignant Miſeries, deſigned for the Puniſhment of the *firſt* and boldeſt *Apoſtates*, *the Devil and his Angels*, thoſe profeſſed and experienced Enemies of Mankind, who will continually be *inſulting* over their Captives, and ſeeking to eaſe and revenge their own Sufferings, by inflicting and multiplying Torments upon others: and yet, ſo cutting a Sentence wounds deeper from the Mouth of *Mercy*, which turns our *Advocate* into our *Accuſer*, and our Saviour into our Judge, who is to pronounce Damnation, and can leave none to hear or pity the *Cry* of them, againſt whom the God of Mercy is *inexorable*. *Newcome*'s Catech. Ser. Vol. I.

(*x*) Matt. xix. 28, and 1 Cor. vi. 2. (*y*) Luke viii. 17. (*z*) *Young*'s Ser. Vol. I. (*a*) Matt. xxv. 41. (*b*) Rev. xx. 14. (*c*) *Tillotſon*'s Ser. Vol. I.

" *neſs* and Majeſty of God, exalted above " all Meaſure, above all Imagination, and " the immenſe *Diſtance* between him and " us, poor *Reptiles* upon Earth, we can- " not but eſteem it a Work beneath the " *Dignity* of his Nature, to call ſuch " Creatures, as are not worthy his Con- " ſideration, (and many of whom he hath " ſuffered to run *wild*, without any *Rule* " to direct their Paths) with ſo much " Form and Solemnity, to appear at his " *Bar*, in order to Condemnation; nor " can we think it conſiſtent with the " kind Intentions, he was once pleaſed " to conceive for us, when (*d*) *he ſent* " *his Son into the World, not to condemn* " *the World, but that the World by him* " *might be ſaved.* It was proper indeed, " to keep the World in Awe, to have the " Terror of an univerſal Judgment hang- " ing over Men's Heads; but if it ſhould " never happen to fall upon them, (*e*) this " would be no Violation of God's Truth " and Faithfulneſs, any more, than it is " eſteemed among Men a Piece of *Falſhood*, " not to do what they have threatened. " The *Apoſtles*, who were moved by the " Spirit of God in what they wrote, had " certainly a greater Knowledge of this " *Myſtery*, than we can pretend to; and " yet they have left it upon Record, that " (*f*) *the Day of the Lord was at Hand*, and " would infallibly come (*g*) even while " they were alive, whereas above *ſeven-* " *teen hundred* Years are paſſed and gone, " without any Sign or Appearance of it: " So that now we may juſtly ſay, (without " incurring the Cenſure of being *Scoffers*) " (*h*) *where is the Promiſe of his coming,* " *for ſince the Fathers fell aſleep, all Things* " *continue, as they were from the Beginning* " *of the Creation? One Generation we ſee* " *paſſes away, and another Generation com-* " *eth; the Sun ariſeth, and the Sun, going* " *down, haſteth to the Place, where it aroſe,* " and ſo it may be, for any Thing we " know, to all Eternity. For, if this " Day of Judgment is to come *at all*, " it is inconſiſtent with the Wiſdom and " *Holineſs* of God, that it ſhould any " longer be *delayed*, ſince the only Ef- " fect of ſuch Delay is, the Encreaſe of " Wickedneſs and Impiety, which, in this " Age of ours, ſeem to be at the higheſt " *Pitch*, and provoking enough, one would " think, to draw down this divine Ven- " geance upon us, if there really were any " Occaſion for it: But, (*i*) *as it is ap-* " *pointed unto Men once to die, and af-* " *ter this, the Judgment*; if there be " any Truth in the received Notion, that " (*k*) every one, after Death, immediately " receives his final *Sentence*, and is there- " upon either ſent to *Hell*, or received " into *Heaven*, and enjoys the *beatifick* " Viſion from the Time, he goeth out " of the Body; if there be any Truth " in this, I ſay, the whole Intent of a *ge-* " *neral* Judgment is anſwered by this *par-* " *ticular one*, which paſſes upon all; as " ſoon as dead, *ſilently*, and without Noiſe " or Confuſion. For how *majeſtick* ſo- " ever we may ſuppoſe the Preſence of the " Judge to be, to awe this great Aſſem- " bly into *Order*, and to preſerve the *So-* " *lemnity* of the Day, yet a Day cannot " poſſibly be a *ſufficient* Space of Time " for the Diſpatch of all the Buſineſs, " that muſt then neceſſarily come before " him. Where he is to hold this grand " Aſſize, in a Place *capacious* enough " for ſuch a Concourſe of People, we " cannot well deviſe; but if ſo many *My-* " *riads* are to be called to an Account " for all they ever did in the whole Courſe " of their Lives; if all their Thoughts, " Words, and Works, both private, and " publick, with all the Circumſtances be- " longing to them, are to be enquired into, " and nicely ſcanned, in order to *propor-* " *tion* their Rewards and Puniſhments; " *four and twenty Hours* are ſo far from " being an adequate Time, that a *thouſand* " *Years* have been thought little enough " by ſome, unleſs we admit of a *ſum-* " *mary* Way of Proceeding, which cannot " ſo well comport with the Righteouſneſs " of this *final* Judgment."

Anſwered, by ſhewing that there will be a final Judgment, *both from* Reaſon, *and* Scripture.

When St. *Paul* preached at *Athens*, which was then the great Seat of Learning, and told his Audience, that (*l*) *God had appointed a Day, wherein he would judge the World in Righteouſneſs*; though they made ſcorn of the Doctrine of the *Reſurrection*, as a new Notion, and utterly incredible, yet had they nothing to alledge againſt the Day of *Judgment*, becauſe that was a received Opinion among them: No *politick* Device (as *Juſtin Martyr*

(*d*) John iii. 17. (*e*) *Tillotſon* ibid. (*f*) 2 Theſſ. ii. 2. (*g*) 1 Cor. xv. 51, 52. (*h*) 2 Pet. iii. 4. (*i*) Heb. ix. 27. (*k*) *Sherlock* on a future Judgment. (*l*) Acts xvii. 31.

ſpeaks) contrived to keep the ignorant Multitude in Awe, no *chimerical* Fancy, peculiar to the *Poets*, though they were their firſt Divines; but what was maintained by their moſt eminent *Philoſophers*, by Men of the ſtricteſt and moſt inquiſitive Reaſoning, nay by ſome of their greateſt *Wits* and profeſſed *Free-Thinkers*, for ſuch we muſt account *Lucian*, and yet his Words are not incongruous to thoſe of ſacred Writ: (*m*) *God*, ſays he, *brought Man out of nothing, and is in Heaven beholding the juſt and unjuſt, and writing down in Books every Man's Actions, in order to recompenſe them, according to their Deeds, in that Day, which he himſelf hath appointed.*

ALL the World indeed, whether *Jews* or *Gentiles*, *Greeks* or *Barbarians*, that had any Notion of a God, made this Inference from the Adminiſtration of his Providence. God, they ſuppoſed, was a juſt and righteous Being, a Lover of Virtue, and an Hater of Vice, and who would not fail, at one Time or other, to make *Retributions* accordingly. The *Diſpenſations* of his Providence, they obſerved, in this World were generally promiſcuous, nay many Times in Favour of the *wicked*, who were ſeen to flow in Wealth and Luxury, and to have Power, and Honour, and all other viſible Glories in full Poſſeſſion, and ſometimes the *Reward* of their Sins and Impieties, while the *Righteous* were not only expoſed to the greateſt Miſeries and Calamities of Life, but frequently made a *Prey* for the Sake of their Righteouſneſs, and ſubjected to Perſecution, for the Preſervation of a good Conſcience; and from thence they inferred, that, as Things were not ordered *now* by ſo exact a Juſtice, as a divine Providence ſeems to require, a Time there certainly would be, when all theſe *Inequalities* would be rectified, and every Man's Condition adjuſted to the *Merit* of his Cauſe.

WITHIN themſelves likewiſe they perceived a *Principle*, which not only directed and informed them what they were to do, but either checked or encouraged them, according to the Nature and Quality of what they had done; if it was good and virtuous, filled them with Pleaſure and Confidence, and Satisfaction of Mind; but if bad and vicious, with Fear, and Terror, and ſad Diſtruſt, even when there was no human Eye to inſpect them, nor any Power upon Earth great enough to call them to Account. Thus might the *heathen* World, from the *Preſages* of Conſcience, its *joyful* Reſentments at every Reflection on their good and virtuous Actions, and its *fearful* Apprehenſions of an unſeen Vengeance, upon the Commiſſion of any groſs and enormous Crimes, together with their daily Obſervation of a certain *Impropriety* in the Diſpenſations of Providence, with Regard to the State and Condition of Mankind here below, arrive at the Knowledge of what we have diſcovered to us more plainly and fully in the ſacred Records, *viz.* that (*n*) *at the Revelation of the righteous Judgment of God, he will render to every Man according to his Deeds, to them, who, by patient Continuance in Well-doing, ſeek for Glory, and Honour, and Immortality, eternal Life; but unto them, that are contentious, and do not obey the Truth, but obey Unrighteouſneſs, Indignation and Wrath, Tribulation and Anguiſh, upon every Soul of Man that doeth evil, of the Jew firſt, and alſo of the Gentile.*

THESE are not *vain Threatnings*, or empty *Bug-bears*, to ſcare Men into Obedience; for what Profit is it to God whether we cleanſe our Ways or no? (*o*) *If thou ſinneſt what doſt thou againſt him? or if thy Tranſgreſſions be multiplied, what doſt thou unto him? If thou be righteous, what giveſt thou him? or what receiveth he of thine Hand? Thy Wickedneſs may hurt, or thy Righteouſneſs may profit a Man,* but ſince neither can have any Influence upon God, the only Reaſon that can be given for his Comminations is, that he will really put them in Execution; for (*p*) *he is not a Man, that he ſhould lye, neither the Son of Man, that he ſhould repent: hath he ſaid, and ſhall he not do it? or hath he ſpoken, and ſhall he not make it good?* Men, ignorant and ſhort ſighted Men may determine Things *raſhly*, and imprudently, and from thence, upon more mature Deliberation, may think proper to alter their Minds, and reverſe their former Purpoſes; but (*q*) *with God there is no Variableneſs, neither Shadow of turning*; and

That God's Threatning it is in earneſt.

(*m*) Philopat. (*n*) Rom. ii. 5, &c. (*o*) Job xxxv. 6, 7. (*p*) Numb. xxiii. 19. (*q*) James i. 17.

and the Reaſon is, becauſe, as he hath an univerſal Foreſight of all Things, he willed and determined every Event, that is to come to paſs, with infinite Wiſdom and Prudence, and therefore (*r*) *the Counſel of the Lord ſtandeth for ever, and the Thoughts of his Heart to all Generations.* And, in like Manner, the *Threatnings* of Men proceed very frequently from a Violence of Paſſion, and as they are occaſioned by Ignorance, and other Imperfections: It thence comes to paſs, that thoſe Inflictions, which, when threatned, ſeemed reaſonable, upon cooler Reflections put on a different Aſpect; and (*s*) therefore, even upon Suppoſition that the leaſt *Deviation* from Truth is a Sin, ſuch Threatnings might not be put in Execution, becauſe the Sin is leſs in remitting than in executing them. But now the Caſe with Reſpect to God is quite different, he fully and diſtinctly knows the Reaſon and Equity of all the Severity that he denounceth, and, as it is by his *Omniſcience* that his Threatnings are determined according to his own unerring Wiſdom and Juſtice, no intervening Conſiderations can prevent their Execution. In ſhort, the Word of God, whether it relates to *Promiſes* or *Threats*, is, like his *Eſſence*, immutable: And therefore we find *Moſes*, in his Exhortation to the People, reminding of both: (*t*) *The Lord thy God he is God, the faithful God, who keepeth Covenant and Mercy with them, that love him, and keep his Commandments, to a thouſand Generations, and repayeth them that hate him, to their Face, to deſtroy them: He will not be ſlack to him, that hateth him; he will repay him to his Face.*

And executing it not below his Majeſty.

IT is trifling therefore to ſay, that if God, who has threatned to call us to an Account at the Day of Judgment, ſhould wave that Inquiſition, *no body can complain of any Wrong or Injuſtice done him, becauſe, in ſo doing, God is not worſe, but better than his Word*; For though, in Reſpect of ourſelves, there is no *Injuſtice* in omitting that Enquiry, yet, as Juſtice is an Attribute of the divine Nature, and abſolutely inſeparable from it, it is no more to be ſuppoſed, that he, *who is righteous in all his Ways, and holy in all his Works*, can refrain from bringing impenitent Wickedneſs to condign Puniſhment, than he can diveſt himſelf of *Superiority* over his Creatures. (*u*) To judge the World, in ſhort, is as eſſential to the *Sovereignty* of God, as to do what is wiſe and good is to his *Wiſdom* and *Goodneſs*, and it is as abſurd to ſay, that God is the Sovereign Lord of the World, but needs not exerciſe his ſovereign Authority in judging Mankind, as to ſay, that he is infinite in Wiſdom and Goodneſs, but needs not to do what is wiſe and good. The Diſtance between him and us is indeed inconceivable; but as (*x*) *his dwelling on high does* not hinder him *from humbling himſelf to behold the Things, that are in Heaven and Earth*; ſo his judging of the World *at laſt*, inſtead of being a Diminution will be a glorious Diſplay of his *Majeſty*, even as his conſtant Inſpection and Government of it *now* is a Manifeſtation of his *eternal Power* and *Godhead*.

That Man is an accountable *Creature.*

WE, when we pleaſe to be ungrateful to our Maker, may degrade human Nature to a Level, with the Beaſts that periſh; but certainly the *Pſalmiſt* had another Notion of it, when he cries out in an holy Exſtacy, (*y*) *Lord! what is Man, that thou art mindful of him, and the Son of Man, that thou viſiteſt him; for thou haſt made him a little lower than the Angels, haſt crowned him with Glory and Honour, and given him Dominion over the Works of thy Hands!* To the meaneſt of the Sons of Men, whom he hath endued with a rational Soul he hath given an *Underſtanding*, capable of diſcerning between Good and Evil, a *Will*, poſſeſſed with a Liberty of Choice, and, for the Regulation of his Actions, a *Law*, either written upon the *fleſhly Tables of his Heart*, or recorded in the ſacred Volume of holy Writ, backed with the Dictates of *Conſcience*, and enforced by powerful *Sanctions*: But now for what Purpoſe was all this *Apparatus*, if there was no Judgment to follow upon it? If the *Abuſe* of theſe Faculties, and the *Violation* of theſe Laws were to paſs unobſerved, and unaccounted for after Death? In vain has God made Man, in the very Frame and Conſtitution of his Nature, an *accountable* Creature, if he thought him an Object too *mean*, to concern himſelf with any farther, too inconſiderable, to be called before his righteous Judgment-Seat at laſt.

And none ſo mean, *as to eſcape it.*

No,

(*r*) Pſal. xxxiii. 11.
(*s*) *Lupton's* Ser.
(*t*) Deut. vii. 9, 10.
(*u*) *Sherlock* on Judgment.
(*x*) Pſal. cxiii. 5, 6.
(*y*) Pſal. viii. 4, &c.

No, no, humble and debaſing Thoughts may well enough become us, conſidering the State of our Weakneſs and Defection, but they degenerate into Baſeneſs and Stupidity, when they tend to impair the Senſe of God's Inſpection, and taking Cognizance of what we do; for (z) *ſay not thou* (as the wiſe Son of *Sirach* excellently expreſſes it) *ſay not thou, I will hide my ſelf from the Lord*; ſhall any *remember me from above? I ſhall not be remembered among ſo many People, for what is my Soul among ſuch an infinite Number of Creatures. Behold the Heaven, and the Heaven of Heavens, and the Deep, and the Earth, and all, that therein is, ſhall be moved, when he ſhall viſit: The Mountains alſo, and the Foundations of the Earth ſhall be ſhaken with Trembling, when the Lord looketh upon them——What Heart can think upon theſe Things worthily? Who can declare the Works of his Juſtice, or who can endure them?*

In what Manner *God will judge the* Heathen *World.*

BEFORE that dreadful Time, (a) ſome are of Opinion, that, as Multitudes of the *Heathen* World had never any Tender made of the Goſpel, but have gone to their Graves without ever hearing of the Name of *Chriſt*, and yet Chriſt himſelf hath plainly declared that (b) *this Goſpel of the Kingdom ſhall be preached in all the World, for a Witneſs unto all Nations, and then ſhall the End come.* From hence I ſay ſome have concluded, that, before the general Judgment, a Time will be, when the *Gentiles*, who died ignorant of the *Chriſtian* Diſpenſation, ſhall be raiſed from the dead, have the Goſpel preached to them, and their final Doom determined, according to their Acceptance or Rejection of it. But as this *Hypotheſis* is not ſo clearly founded on Scripture, God's Judgment of the *Heathen* World may well enough be accounted for without it. Our bleſſed Saviour, ſpeaking of his Return to Judgment under the Parable of a *Maſter of a Family* taking an Account of his Servants Behaviour, during his Abſence, concludes with this Obſervation; (c) *to whomſoever much is given, of him ſhall be much required, and to whom Men have committed much, of him they will aſk the more*, which, by Parity of Reaſon, ſuppoſes that, where God has given little, he requires little. The *Heathens*, no Doubt, labour under great Diſadvatages, in Compariſon of thoſe, who are favoured with a divine Revelation, but ſtill the Apoſtle obſerves, that they are not utterly deſtitute of a Rule for the Guidance of their Actions, when, *though* (d) *they have not the Law, they are a Law unto themſelves, and by doing by Nature the Things contained in the Law, ſhew the Work of the Law, written in their Hearts, their Conſcience alſo bearing Witneſs, and their Thoughts, the mean while, accuſing, or elſe excuſing them*: So that it is by the Law of right *Reaſon* ingraven in every Breaſt, till it comes to be defaced, that the *Gentile* World is to be judged, and in this Judgment St. *Paul*, by telling us, that (e) *God winked* at ſome Irregularities in their Conduct, ſeems to intimate, that he would make favourable Allowances for their invincible Ignorance, and other unhappy Circumſtances of their Education, which would not be indulged to thoſe, who lived like *Pagans* under the Light, and great Advantages of the Goſpel. For, though the *firſt* coming of Chriſt was with a gracious Intent, that, (f) *whoſoever believeth in him*, and lives anſwerably to ſuch a Belief, *ſhould not periſh, but have everlaſting Life*; yet as they, *who believe not*, or, if they believe, live as if they did not, *are condemned already*, his *ſecond* coming will be to take Vengeance on them, who have defeated the Means and Method of their Salvation, (g) *by counting the Blood of the Covenant an unholy Thing, and by doing Deſpite to the Spirit of Grace.*

That the Apoſtles did not believe this Judgment was to be in their Days.

IT muſt not be diſſembled indeed, that, in the *primitive* Times, the Chriſtians, by a Miſapplication of certain Prophecies relating to the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, were perſuaded, that *the End of all Things was at hand*, and that Chriſt's coming to Judgment would happen, even while they were yet alive. But this Error, which might be of evil Conſequence, not to themſelves only, but to all future Generations, who, finding the firſt Chriſtians miſtaken in their Expectations, might from thence conclude, that the *whole* was a Miſtake, and that the Day of Judgment would not come at all, becauſe it did not come at the Time expected; this Error, I ſay, the Apoſtle ſets himſelf,

(z) Ecclus xvi. 17, &c. (a) *Staynoe* of Salvation. (b) Matt. xxiv. 14. (c) Luke xii. 48.
(d) Rom. ii. 14, 15. (e) Acts xvii. 30. (f) John iii. 16. (g) Heb. x. 29.

himſelf, with ſome Earneſtneſs, to oppoſe: (*h*) *Now I beſeech you, Brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and by our gathering together unto him, that ye be not ſoon ſhaken in Mind, or be troubled, neither by Spirit, nor by Word, nor by Letter, as from us, as that the Day of Chriſt is at hand*; and, to ſatisfy them of this, though he does not pretend to foretel the preciſe Time, which himſelf knew nothing of, yet he aſſures them (*i*) *that there muſt come* * *a falling away firſt, and that the Man of Sin be revealed, the Son of Perdition, who oppoſeth and exalteth himſelf againſt all that is called God*; and, (*k*) in another Place, he acquaints us with a greater Event (though we ſee no *Proſpect* of it as yet) which is to be accompliſhed before the Conſummation of all Things, and that is, the *Converſion of* the *Jews*, even as our Saviour had propheſied, (*l*) *that Jeruſalem was to be troden down of the Gentiles, till the Times of the Gentiles be fulfilled*, or, as the Apoſtle expreſſes it, *till the Fulneſs of the Gentiles be come in, and then all Iſrael ſhall be ſaved.* Now if we may ſuppoſe, that the *Apoſtles* were ſo far endued with the Spirit of *Prophecy*, as to foreſee that firſt a great *Apoſtacy* from the Chriſtian Faith, then a prevailing Power of *Antichriſt*, and, at laſt, a general *Converſion* of the *Jewiſh* Nation would precede the Day of Judgment, they could never imagine, that it was to happen in the Time, while they were alive; and therefore whenever we find them ſpeaking in the *firſt Perſon*, as, *we ſhall not all ſleep, we ſhall all be changed, and we that are alive*, &c. we muſt not ſuppoſe, that they meant it of themſelves, or of any other Perſons then in being, but rather of Chriſtians in future Ages, and, particularly, in the laſt Period of the World, whenever that ſhould happen.

God's Computation of Time, and ours different.

(*m*) *To every Thing there is a Seaſon, and a Time to every Purpoſe under the Heaven*, and much more to the great and myſterious Affair of Man's *Redemption*, which has all along been tranſacted with the ſtricteſt Regard to Times and Seaſons. There was a *Fulneſs of Time* for Chriſt's coming into the World; a Time for his Death; a Time for his Reſurrection; a Time for his Aſcenſion; and there is likewiſe a Time for his Return from Heaven: It is a frivolous Argument therefore to ſay, that God will not judge the World *at all*, becauſe he has not *yet* done it, unleſs we could prove, that the Day of Judgment is already *paſt*, or that Chriſt *delays* his coming, unleſs we could preciſely tell the Day, that God has appointed for his *ſecond Advent*. We indeed, who compute Time by a Succeſſion of Days, may account the *Lord ſlack as concerning his Promiſe*; but his Calculation and ours are widely different. (*n*) *One Day with him is as a thouſand Years, and a thouſand Years as one Day*: Though therefore he were to delay his coming, as many Ages more, as he has already done Years, yet what is ſuch a Space of Time to him, whoſe Duration is eternal? Two Days with us are not much: Two thouſand Years with him are as little: and it is by his Computation, I hope, that, in this Matter, we are to be decided.

An eternal Continuance or Succeſſion of Things, falſe, and impoſſible.

In the mean Time, the Suggeſtion is not true, that (*o*) *all Things have continued, as they were from the Beginning of the Creation*, ſince there has been ſo vaſt an Alteration in the Face of Nature by the violent Concuſſions, that happened at *Noah*'s Flood, when (*p*) *the World, that then was, being by the Word of God overflowed with*

* By theſe Words of the Apoſtle we may moſt properly mean that great *Apoſtacy* of the *Jews*, which happened not only in *Judæa*, and *Paleſtine*, but throughout *Aſia* and all other Parts, where they had embraced the Goſpel. What gave Occaſion to this *Revolt* from the Chriſtian Faith was, their Zeal for the Obſervation of the Law, which they conceived to be of *eternal* Obligation; their beloved *Dream* of a *temporal* Kingdom to be erected by their *Meſſias* at his coming, and (what was more than all) the grievous *Perſecutions*, both from *Jews* and *Gentiles*, to which their *Profeſſion* of Chriſtianity expoſed them. When the Apoſtle wrote this Epiſtle, the *Defection*, here mentioned, was not begun; for though the *Myſtery of Iniquity was already working* in the Seductions of the *falſe Prophets*, endeavouring to *corrupt* the *Minds* of the *Gentile* Converts *from the Simplicity, that was in Chriſt*, 2 Cor. xi. 13. and to bring them *into Bondage* to the *Jewiſh* Law, Gal. ii. 4; yet the great Relapſe of the *Jewiſh* Converts to their old Religion ſeems to have begun, about ten Years after the Date of this Epiſtle, as it appears from that to the *Hebrews* (which was wrote *A. D.* 63.) wherein the Apoſtle is very *vehement* in his Admonitions and Exhortations to *Stedfaſtneſs*, and repreſents, in ſtrong Terms, the dreadful State of all, who ſhould revolt after this Manner, *fall back to Perdition*, and incur *the Vengeance of the living God*, Heb. x. *Whitby* in Locum.

(*h*) 2 Theſſ. ii. 1, 2. (*i*) Ver. 3. (*k*) Rom. xi. 15, &c. (*l*) Luke xxi. 24. (*m*) Eccleſ. iii. 1. (*n*) 2 Pet. iii. 8. (*o*) Ver. 4. (*p*) Ver. 6.

Water, perished; which Fate of the old World is Reason enough to believe, that God is not in Jest, when he threatens to destroy it again by another Kind of Element; for (*q*) *the Heaven and the Earth* (as the Apostle goes on) *which now are, by the same Word are kept in Store, reserved unto the Fire, against the Day of Judgment, and Perdition of wicked Men.*

The Sun rises and sets, we see, and this Course of Nature, for aught we know, may go on for ever. But we should do well to remember, (*r*) that what we call the Course of Nature, truly and properly speaking, is nothing else, but the *Will* of God, producing certain Effects in a constant, regular, and uniform Manner, and that this Course, or Manner of acting, being every Moment perfectly *arbitrary*, is as easy to be suspended, or interrupted at any Time, as it is to be preserved. Though therefore we may not give in to the common Opinion, *viz.* that the World *grows old*, and is every Day verging towards its final Dissolution, yet this we cannot but acknowledge, that whenever it shall please God to withdraw that divine *Energy*, which informs this vast *Machine*, and sets it a moving, all the Wheels of it (like those of a *Clock* when the Weights are down) will be stop'd in an Instant, and move no more for ever. *One Generation*, we see again, *passes away, and another comes:* But that it has not been so *from Everlasting* is plain from hence, that, as Mankind must be allowed to have had a *gradual* Increase, it is but going back so many Ages, and we soon descend to a single original Pair; and that it will not be so *to Everlasting*, is equally plain, not only because an infinite or eternal Duration of *Successions* (as we had Occasion to shew before) implies a *Contradiction*, but more especially because God himself hath declared, that (*s*) *his Spirit shall not always strive with Man, for that he is Flesh*, but, for the Wickedness and Impiety thereof, will put a final End to the State of this World, and the Propagation of Mankind on it, and, at the Conclusion thereof, will summon all before the Judgment-Seat of Christ, in Order to receive according to their Works.

Why the Day of Judgment is delayed.

Here then is the true Reason of God's delaying his intended Judgment, that the World, as yet, is not sufficiently ripe for it. He is loth to destroy it, until the Wickedness of Mankind is grown incurable, and past all Remedy. (*t*) *He is patient to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to Repentance.* But, as (*u*) *his Long-Suffering waited in the Days of Noah, while the Ark was preparing*, till he saw (*x*) *that the Wickedness of Man was grown exceeding great upon the Earth*, and then he brought upon them the *swift Destruction* by a Deluge; so (*y*) when *Atheism*, and Infidelity, and all Manner of Profaneness shall prevail; when the Church itself shall be over-run with *Heresies*, *Schisms*, and a mere external *Form* of Religion, without the *Power* of it; when Men shall walk after their own Lusts; when Faith shall fail, Iniquity abound, and the *Love of many wax cold*; then is the Time for God's putting a Period to the World, and then the Time for (*z*) *the Lord of those wicked Servants*, who, presuming upon their Master's *Delay, begin to smite their Fellow-Servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken, to come, in a Day, when they look not for him, and in an Hour, that they are not aware of, to cut them asunder, and to appoint them their Portion with Hypocrites; there shall be weeping and gnashing of Teeth.*

The Notion of a particular Judgment groundless.

The Apostle to the *Hebrews* informs us, that (*a*) *it is appointed for Men once to die, and, after Death, Judgment*; but that he does not mean any *particular* Judgment, insuent upon their Departure hence, is evident from what follows, *Christ was once offered to bear the Sins of many, and unto them, that look for him, shall he appear the second Time, without Sin, unto Salvation.* This Life indeed is the only Time of our *Probation*, and the Fate both of good and bad Men is determined, as soon as they leave it. Good Men are in a State of Happiness, and have their Happiness perpetually improving by a joyful Expectation of the Day of Judgment, when they shall be fully rewarded, and received into the *beatifick* Presence of God in

(*q*) 2 Pet. iii. 7. (*r*) *Clarke*'s *Boyle*'s Lect. (*s*) Gen. vi. 3. (*t*) 2 Pet. iii. 9.
(*u*) 1 Pet. iii. 20. (*x*) Gen. vi. 5. (*y*) *Sherlock* on Judgment. (*z*) Matt. xxiv. 48, &c,
(*a*) Heb. ix. 27, 28.

in the higheſt Heavens; and bad Men are in a Sate of Miſery, and have that Miſery continually augmented by the terrible Proſpect of a Time to come, when they ſhall be condemned to a State of endleſs Puniſhment; but that this final Miſery or Happineſs ſhall, immediately after Death, paſs upon either of them; that the good ſhall be received into *Heaven*, or the bad condemned to *Hell*, before the Day of Judgment, we have no Authority from Scripture to affirm. (*b*) The Souls of the Righteous, after their Departure, we allow, are in *Abraham's Boſom*, in *Paradiſe*, nay in Heaven itſelf, if by Heaven we mean thoſe inferior *Manſions*, which Chriſt has prepared for their Reception, until the Reſurrection; but when we find St. *Paul* ſpeaking of (*c*) *a Crown of Righteouſneſs*, to be *given him*, but not given, *until the Day of the Appearance of Chriſt*; St. *Peter* acquainting us with (*d*) *an Inheritance incorruptible, reſerved in Heaven for us*, but not ready to be revealed, until the *laſt Day*; and St. *John* telling us, that the Souls of the (*e*) *Saints under the Altar* were deſired to *reſt a little Seaſon, till the Number of their Fellow-Servants was accompliſhed:* And, in like Manner, when we find St. *Paul* affirming, that (*f*) *for the hardened and impenitent there is Wrath treaſured up againſt the Day of Wrath*, and *Revelation of the righteous Judgment of God*; St. *Peter* declaring, that (*g*) *the Lord reſerveth the unjuſt unto the Day of Judgment, to be puniſhed*; even as St. *Jude* tells us, that (*h*) *the Devils* themſelves are *reſerved in Chains of everlaſting Darkneſs unto the Judgment of the great Day*, we can hardly be induced to think, that the Proceſs of that Day can be *ſuperceded* by any previous Form of Abſolution or Condemnation, or that Men's Happineſs or Miſery can be compleat, or their final Doom awarded, until a *publick* Sentence, from the Judgment-Seat of Chriſt, ſhall paſs upon them.

The Tranſactions of the Judgment Day, and how long it is to laſt.

BUT the *Trial* of Mankind is not the only Buſineſs of that Day: Several other momentous Matters are then to be tranſacted. The *myſterious* Turns of Providence, and the *promiſcuous* Diſpenſations of it; the Reaſons for *Vice* triumphant, and *Virtue* in Diſtreſs, and why Men (*i*) *never knew either the Love or Hatred of God, by all that was here before them*, will then be unfolded and explained: The hidden *Decrees* and Counſels of God, which we are not now allowed to look into, and which all our Sagacity cannot find out, and the many wonderful *Methods*, he hath employed, both in the Government and Redemption of the World, will be expoſed to open View: The ſublime *Doctrines* of our holy Profeſſion, that we now contemplate with Admiration, will then be laid open to our Underſtanding, and reconciled to our Reaſon. Many Intricacies, and dark Scenes of Things, which now puzzle the moſt inquiſitive, will be ſet in a fair Light, and brought down to the meaneſt Comprehenſion: But, above all, then ſhall the Goodneſs, and Mercy, and Power, and Juſtice, and Holineſs of God, in every Inſtance of his Actings with Men, be fully diſplayed, and cleared from the unjuſt Creatures, that have been put upon them, and (*k*) *from all the hard Speeches, which ungodly Sinners have ſpoken againſt them:* And upon this Preſumption we cannot but imagine, that the Tranſactions of this grand *Inqueſt* will employ a conſiderable Space of Time, though, in Scripture Phraſe, it is only called *a Day*; but then we muſt remember, that, the Word *Day*, in ſacred Writ, is not reſtrained to the narrow Compaſs of a *few* Hours, but denotes very frequently * a *long* Period of Time, and will, no Doubt, upon this Occaſion, be extended to a Proportion anſwerable to the Solemnity of the Proceedings, and the Multiplicity of Buſineſs therein tranſacted.

Where it will be held.

WHERE theſe Proceedings will commence, or in what *Place* our Judge ſhall pleaſe to hold this general Seſſions, the Hints, that we have in Scripture, are but obſcure, but, ſuch as they are, they have in-

* As the Kingdom of the *Meſſias* is called very frequently, in the *Jewiſh* Writings, *the Day of Judgment*, ſo from the *Jews* Chriſt, and his Apoſtles took the Expreſſion, and applied it to our Lord's *ſecond* coming; but then as they underſtood by it a Time of many Years Continuance, ſo, whoever will conſult Mr. *Mede* (in the third Book of his *Commentary* on the *Revelation*) will be abundantly ſatisfied, that, in the *New Teſtament*, the Word *Day* ſignifies a conſiderable Length of Time, as in Matt. vi. 11. compared with Luke xi. 3. and ſo in John xvi. 26. *Edwards's* Body Vol. I.

(*b*) *Heylyn* on the Creed. (*c*) 2 Tim. iv. 8. (*d*) 1 Pet. i. 4, 5. (*e*) Rev. vi. 11. (*f*) Rom. ii. 5. (*g*) 2 Pet. ii. 9. (*h*) Jude Ver. 6. (*i*) Eccles. ix. 1. (*k*) Jude Ver. 15.

induced many learned Men, eſpecially among the Ancients, to conclude, that it will be in the Air, at a Diſtance from the Earth ſpacious enough to contain all the Sons and Daughters of *Adam*, over * the Valley of *Jehoſaphat*, which lies contiguous to the Mount of *Olives*, from whence he aſcended, and † are both *Eaſtward* of *Jeruſalem*. For ſince our bleſſed Saviour, *ſay they*, was crucified, and put to open Shame in the very Neighbourhood of this Place, there ſeems to be a great Congruity in the divine Counſel, that he ſhould there appear inveſted with publick Honour, and, where he was once condemned, and puniſhed with ſo much *Malice and Injuſtice*, there be exalted on a bright *Tribunal*, to arbitrate the Fate of all Mankind with *Truth* and *Equity*.

And in what Manner diſpatched.

PROCEEDINGS of this Kind among Men do often meet with a *Retardation* from the mere Want of *Evidence*. (*k*) Facts will be obſcure, and Circumſtances doubtful, and Allegations preſumptive, and Teſtimonies inconſiſtent, ſo that, to make a farther Examination into their reſpective Caſes, both the *innocent* and *guilty* muſt be ſometimes referred to another Aſſize: But now, in the righteous Judgment of Chriſt, where all Matters of Cognizance are thoroughly known, and the Proofs are clear both for Acquittal and Conviction, there can be no Obſtruction or Delay. For, ſince God has implanted in Men's Minds a Principle, which we call *Conſcience*, wherein the Notices of all they ſay, or do, or think, ſo far as they are of a moral Nature, are regiſtered and laid up, to be produced, either *for* or *againſt* them, at the general Audit, there is no doubt to be made, but that, as he can read this Regiſter, as well as we, nay can read it through the *Impediments*, that ſhade, and obſcure it, which we cannot; ſo can he, when he pleaſes, make it legible to all others: that is, he can ſo far elevate the Underſtandings of all Men (as it is reaſonable to believe he will do, upon the Soul's Re-union with the Body) as to make them able, at one Glance as it were, to read each others Hiſtory, imprinted in their Conſcience in *intelligible Signatures*, as familiarly, as if they were graven on their *Foreheads*, which cannot but ſupply the Place of much Enquiry, and many Witneſſes, and greatly facilitate the Method of Proceeding: eſpecially if we conſider farther, (*l*) that, as the Judge, by Reaſon of his *Omniſcience* is able to attend to infinite Cauſes at once without any Diſtraction, and they, who are to be judged, by Reaſon of their *Spirituality*, are in a Condition to attend to every one's Trial, while they are undergoing

* The *Ancients* ground their Opinion of this, upon the aforecited Paſſage in Zecariah, Ch. xiv. 4. *his Feet ſhall ſtand in that Day upon the Mount of Olives, which is before Jeruſalem on the Eaſt, and the Mount of Olives ſhall cleave in the Midſt thereof, towards the Eaſt, and towards the Weſt, and there ſhall be a very great Valley.* But this is a Prediction (as we obſerved) which relates chiefly to our Saviour's *Aſcenſion*, and not to his *ſecond* Advent: There is therefore another Paſſage in the Prophet *Joel* iii. 1, 2. which they place more Confidence in, and that is this——*In thoſe Days, I will bring again the Captivity of Judah, and I will gather all Nations, and will bring them down into the Valley of Jehoſaphat, and will plead with them there for my People.* But this Prophecy ſpeaks not of the *laſt* Judgment, but of a *particular* one, that was to be executed on the Enemies of the *Jews*, namely the *Chaldeans* and *Aſſyrians*. But though theſe Words do not plainly relate to the Day of the general Judgment, yet there are many, who cannot but believe, that there is ſomething of Truth in this *Tradition* of the Ancients. "For what Country, *ſay they*, is more likely to be made the firſt Place of Chriſt's Arrival, than *Ju-* "*dæa?* And, in *Judæa*, what Spot of Ground more likely, than *Jeruſalem*, where he openly ſuffered? "But then to ſuppoſe, that he will not only erect his Throne of Judgment here, but *fix* it in this nar- "row Place, is idle, and groundleſs. The great Court of *Judicature* may not perhaps be confined to "one Country or Region, but (for aught we know) may be *ambulatory*, and adjourn itſelf from Place "to Place, hovering continually in the Air and Clouds over them. *Edwards*'s Body Vol. I.

† From hence it is inferred by ſome, (and who have no mean *Authority* for it) that Chriſt, when he parted with his Diſciples on the *Mount of Olives*, did aſcend up into the *Eaſt Part of Heaven* (I mean that Part of Heaven, which anſwers the *equinoctial Eaſt* upon the Earth) that in that Part of Heaven he ſitteth now *at the right Hand of the Throne of God*; and from the *ſame* ſhall likewiſe come at the Day of Judgment; which ſeems to agree with the Words of Baruch, iv. 36. *O Jeruſalem, look about thee towards the Eaſt, and behold the Joy, that cometh unto thee from God.* And for this Reaſon we find the *Kebla*, or Quarter of Heaven to which Chriſtians were appointed to direct their Prayers, was the *Eaſt*. For ſo, in the *apoſtolick Conſtitutions*, the Order of divine Service was, that, *riſing up, and turning towards the Eaſt*, the People *ſhould pray unto God, who ſetteth upon the Heaven of Heavens in the eaſtern Part.* Clem. Apoſt. Conſt. L. 2. C. 61. *Heylyn* on the Creed.

(*k*) *Young*'s Ser. Vol. I. (*l*) *Scot*'s Mediator.

dergoing their own: there is no Occaſion for their being tried ſucceſſively one after another: and if ſo, it may be preſumed, that, as they certainly will be (*m*) ſentenced together, ſo not improbably they will be tried together, and, conſequently, that the Trial of all of one *Claſs* may be tranſacted in a ſhort Time, as the Trial of *one*. But however this Affair be managed, on this we may depend, that the Judge of all the World muſt be exalted, cannot but do Right; and that every one, whether he is acquitted, or condemned, ſhall find Reaſon enough within himſelf to ſay, (*n*) *great and marvellous are thy Works, O Lord God Almighty, juſt and true are thy Ways, thou King of Saints!*

The DISSERTATION.

Of the general Conflagration.

The Conflagration univerſally *believed.*

THE Deſtruction of the World by Fire was a Notion, that * in all Nations univerſally prevailed, and may therefore be ſuppoſed to have deſcended, by a conſtant *Tradition*, from the firſt Creation of it. The *Jews* of old believed it: the *Pagan* Philoſophers embraced it: their *Poets* abound with lively Deſcriptions of it; and their *Sibylls* make it the Subject of their *prophetick* Songs: but then there was a Difference between them and us in Relation to this great Event. For, whereas moſt of their *Sages* held, that, after a certain *Revolution* of Years, all Things ſhould *periſh* by Fire, but ſoon after be *reſtored* again, which they called a *periodical Regeneration*, and that, at ſuch and ſuch Intervals of Time, theſe Deſtructions and Renovations would always happen in the Univerſe, our Opinion of the Matter is, that there ſhall be but *one* general *Conflagration*, when (in the Stile of Scripture) (*o*) *the Heavens ſhall paſs away with a great Noiſe, and the Elements ſhall melt with fervent Heat; the Earth alſo, and the Works, that are therein, ſhall be burnt up, and* (*p*) *no Place found for them for ever.*

When it is to begin.

WHEN this ſad Deſtruction is to happen, whether at Chriſt's firſt Appearance from Heaven, and before he begins the grand Aſſize, or not till after the whole Affair is ended, and the final *Sentence* pronounced againſt the wicked, the Opinion of the Learned have been different, but not equally ſupported by Reaſon. For, ſince (*q*) Chriſt himſelf ſhall place his Throne in the Air, and all Mankind ſhall be gathered before him, in order to be judged, a World all on Flames at the ſame Time muſt neceſſarily diſturb the *Regularity* of the Proceedings, nor can it be ſo proper a *Scene* for ſuch an Appearance. In the full and popular Deſcription, which our Saviour gives us of that Judgment, the laſt remarkable Thing is, his *Pronunciation* of the Sentence againſt the Wicked, where the Execution of it is ſuppoſed to follow; and therefore ſince burning the World is repreſented in Scripture as an Act of Chriſt's *vindictive* Juſtice, who is ſaid to *(r) deſcend from Heaven in a flaming Fire, to take Vengeance on them, that know not God*, it is moſt congruous to Reaſon, that this firing of the World ſhould be the concluſive Act of the Day

* The *Romans*, who had their Learning from the *Grecians*, were all (as appears both from their *Poets*, and Proſe-writers) of this Opinion. Among the *Egyptians* (as *Plato* in his *Timæus* tells us) it was the Doctrine of their *Prieſts*, that the fatal *Cataſtrophe* of the World would be by *Fire* and *Water*. The *Perſians* made their beloved God, *Fire*, at length conſume all Things, that were conſumable; and the *Chaldeans* not only taught the *Conflagration*, but alſo fixed it to a certain *Period* of Time, when there ſhould happen a great *Conjunction* of the Planets in *Cancer*. So univerſal indeed is this Tradition, that it is ſuppoſed to be one of the *Doctrines*, which *Noah* delivered to his Children, to be handed down to their Poſterity, and to be preſerved, and propagated by Men of *Contemplation*. Nay *Joſephus*, in his Antiquities, carries it as high as *Adam*, from whom *Seth* his Son received this Information — that there ſhould be a Deſtruction of the *Univerſe*, once by the Force of *Water*, and again by the Violence of *Fire*, and that, in Conſequence hereof, he erected two *Pillars*, one of *Stone*, which might reſiſt the Water, and another of *Brick*, which might endure the *Fire*, and upon them engraved his *aſtronomical* Obſervations, that ſo they might remain to Poſterity. *Burnet*'s Theory Vol. II. and *Ray*'s Phyſ. Theol. Diſcourſes.

(*m*) Matt. xxv. 34. (*n*) Rev. xv. 3. (*o*) 2 Pet. iii. 10. (*p*) Rev. xx. 11. (*q*) *Sherlock* on Judgment. (*r*) 2 Theſſ. i. 8.

of Judgment, the Beginning of the Puniſhment of the damned, and the putting their direful Sentence in Execution.

How far to extend.

How far this *Conflagration* will extend; whether to the *etherial* or *aerial* Heavens only, has been a Matter of ſome Debate among the Learned. The *Ancients* were of Opinion (if we may take the Tradition from (*s*) the *Poets*, that have tranſmitted it to us) that not only the Earth, but alſo the Heavens, and heavenly Bodies ſhall all be involved in the ſame common Fate; and to this, ſome Paſſages in Scripture, ſuch as (*t*) *Heaven and Earth ſhall paſs away*, (*u*) the *Heavens ſhall vaniſh away like a Smoke*, (*x*) *the Heavens ſhall periſh*, being (*y*) *reſerved unto Fire againſt the Day of Judgment*, ſeem to give ſome Countenance: but when it is conſidered that the Word *Heavens* is of an *equivocal* Signification, and uſed indifferently to denote either the ſuperior Heavens, whether *empyreal* or *etherial*, or this ſublunary aerial Heaven, together with its Clouds, Meteors, and every Thing contained in the Compaſs of its Atmoſphere, by (*z*) *the Heavens, that ſhall be diſſolved, and the Elements, that ſhall melt with a fervent Heat*, we need underſtand no more, than the whole Compages of this ſublunary World, and all the Creatures that are in it, becauſe the *etherial* Heavens are at too immenſe a Diſtance ever to be affected by its Conflagration. This *Diſſolution* of the World is for the Puniſhment of its wicked Inhabitants; nor is there any Occaſion for the divine Power to extend the *Devaſtation* farther, than the *Pollution* and *Provocation* reached under the Direction of this divine Power; what *natural* Cauſes will contribute to this fiery Devaſtation needs not much Enquiry: for

Whence to be ſupplied with Combuſtibles.

if we conſider the vaſt *Stores* of *combuſtible* Materials, that are lodged in the *Bowels* of the Earth, and frequently diſcover themſelves in thoſe *Irruptions*, and *Vulcanos*, which vomit out Smoke, and Aſhes, and ſometimes whole Rivers of *liquid* Fire, upon the Surface of it: and if we take into our Thoughts, at the ſame Time, all the *Meteors*, and Exhalations, thoſe *Magazines* of Thunder and Lightning, that are ingendered and formed in the *Air*, without ſuppoſing a nearer *Approach* of the Sun to the Earth, or an *Eruption* of the *central* Fire, if there be any in it, we ſhall find a ſufficient Quantity of Combuſtibles, whenever God ſhall give the Word, for an univerſal Conflagration. *Pliny*, (*a*) in his *natural Hiſtory*, looks upon it as a Miracle, that any one Day ſhould paſs, without the World's being in a Blaze, conſidering the Multitude of *ſubterraneous* Fires, the inbred Heat of *Minerals*, and other inflammatory Concretions, the infinite Number of *Stars*, and the vaſt Amaſſment of Flames in the Body of the *Sun*; how much more then have we need to wonder, that, after the Revolution of ſo many Days, and Years, and Ages, it ſtill continues in its *priſtine* Form and Comelineſs? But this can only be imputed to the immediate Interpoſition of that divine Power, which, as yet, thinks proper to preſerve the Vigour and *Harmony* of Nature.

And in what Manner *effected.*

BUT, when God ſhall once (*b*) *ariſe to ſhake terribly the Earth*, all this Harmony ſhall be at an End. At his Command one Part of the Creation ſhall be armed againſt another, and all, at laſt, *overborn* by the raging Element of Fire. For (*c*) then ſhall the ſcattered Seeds of *Sulphur* unite into a Body, and all the Principles of Ruin and Combuſtion combine together. The fiery Matter, which is now diſperſed up and down within the *Entrails* of the Earth, and, for ſo many Ages, has fed *Ætna*, *Veſuvius*, and other burning Mountains, will by Degrees gather together into vaſt Rivers of Fire, which rolling to and fro, to force their Way into the open Air, will perhaps occaſion thoſe prodigious Earthquakes, (*d*) of which our Saviour ſpeaks: till, having made a Paſſage, and torn whole Continents in Pieces by their Eruption, they will ſpire up on High, and kindling the Atmoſphere (ſufficiently fraught with catching Vapours already) will turn it into one continued Blaze, while Torrents of Fire come pouring down from the Stars, and from the Sun, and joining with the flaming *Streams* that are continually iſſuing from the Earth will, in an Inſtant, *cover* (*e*) *the Deep like as with a Garment*, and, by their united Force, (*f*) drain and exhauſt the immenſe Waters of the wide Sea.

THUS,

(*s*) *Ray*'s Phyſico Theol. (*t*) Matt. xxiv. 35. (*u*) Iſa. li. 6. (*x*) Heb. i. 11. (*y*) 2 Pet. iii. 7. (*z*) Ver. 12. (*a*) Lib. 2. C. 107. (*b*) Iſai. ii. 19. (*c*) *Collier*'s Ser. (*d*) Mark xiii. 8. and Luke xxi. 11. (*e*) Pſal. civ. 6. (*f*) Amos vii. 4.

Thus, (according to the Obſervation of a learned and ingenious Enquirer into the *natural* Cauſes of this grand *Cataſtrophe*) "There will be a great *Analogy* between "the two *Deluges*, that which has been of "*Water*, and that which will be of *Fire*; "for as, at the former, the *Windows of* "*Heaven were opened* above, and the *Abyſs* "was opened below, and the Waters of "theſe two joined together to overflow the "World; ſo, at the Conflagration, God "will rain down Fire from Heaven, as "he did once upon Sodom, and, at the "ſame Time, the *ſubterraneous* Store-"Houſes of Fire will be broken open "(which anſwers the Deſcription of the "*Abyſs*,) and theſe two, meeting and "mingling together, will involve the Earth, "and the elemental Heavens, in Flames." But what our Saviour mentions as the chief and principal Cauſe of this Inflammation, is, the *(g) fall of the Stars from Heaven, and the Powers of Heaven being ſhaken:* for when theſe ſtarry Bodies are ſuffered to wander from their Orbits, and to fall into Confuſion and Diſorder, like Fire out of its Place, they cannot but do an infinite deal of Miſchief, and are ſufficient of themſelves, without the Concurrence of any other Cauſe, to ſet the whole Univerſe in a bright Flame.

While the Righteous are preſerved.

How the Righteous ſhall be preſerved in the Midſt of this burning World, the Apoſtle has intimated, in that Paſſage to the *Theſſalonians*, where he tells us, that (*h*) they *ſhall be caught up in the Clouds to meet the Lord in the Air*; and, being thus placed out of the Reach, and above the Surges of this fiery *Deluge*, they ſhall be made *Spectators* of this amazing *Scene* of Ruin and Deſolation; ſee this *grand Idol* of Mankind conſuming in the Fire of God's Indignation, breaking and tumbling to Pieces, buried in its own Rubbiſh, and reduced to that dark and confuſed Chaos, which the Prophet *Jeremiah* has thus repreſented: (*i*) *I beheld the Earth, and lo, it was without Form and void, and the Heavens, and they had no Light. I beheld the Mountains, and lo, they trembled, and all the Hills moved lightly, I beheld, and lo, there was no Man, and all the Birds of the Heaven were fled. I beheld, and lo, the fruitful Place was a Wilderneſs, and all the Cities thereof were broken down, at the Preſence of the Lord, and by his fierce Anger.*

A Deſcription of the Conflagration.

To form ſome Notion then of that tremendous Event, imagine the *judicial* Proceſs being over, the Righteous retired to a Place of *Security*, and the Wicked left alone in Expectation of their Doom, upon the Face of the trembling Earth: imagine, I ſay, that, upon our Lord's giving the *Signal*, this ſublunary World were all covered over with Flames, by the *Treaſures* of Fire emptying themſelves from Heaven, and by the *Stores* of Vengeance, which were lodged in the Bowels of the Earth, burſting out every where, and, at each Eruption, tearing the dry Land, and making (*k*) *the wide deep boil like a Pot*; that Sea and Earth were *ſhuffled* together in a wild Diſorder, *Iſlands*, and *Continents* daſhed againſt each other, Mountains ſhut off from their *Baſis*, and prodigious Rocks blown up into the Air in ten thouſand thouſand Pieces; and that, during this Devaſtation on Earth, *Comets* were blazing, the *Elements* melting, *(l) the Stars falling like untimely Figs from the Tree, when it is ſhaken with a mighty Wind, and Heaven departing, as a Scrowl, when it is rolled up*; and then we may frame ſome faint Idea of the many terrible Phænomena, as concurrent Cauſes of this Devaſtation, and what abundant Reaſon there will be (*m*) *for Mens Hearts failing them for Fear, and for looking after thoſe Things, which are coming on the Earth*; when *Fear and the Pit and the Snare* (as the Prophet deſcribes it) *ſhall come upon thee, O Inhabitant of the Earth, and it ſhall come to paſs, that he, who fleeth from the Noiſe of the Fear, ſhall fall into the Pit, and he, that cometh up out of the Midſt of the Pit, ſhall be taken in the Snare, for the Windows from on High are opened, and the Foundations of the Earth do ſhake. The Earth is utterly broken down, the Earth is clean diſſolved: The Earth is moved exceedingly: The Earth ſhall reel to and fro like a Drunkard, and ſhall be removed like a Cottage; and the Tranſgreſſion thereof ſhall be heavy upon it, and it ſhall fall, and not riſe again.*

Which utterly deſtroys every Thing.

WHAT our Saviour ſaid to his *Diſciples*, with Relation to the *Temple*, *ſeeſt thou*

(*g*) Matt. xxiv. 29. (*h*) 1 Theſſ. iv. 17. (*i*) Jer. iv. 23, &c. (*k*) Job xli. 31. (*l*) Rev. vi. 13, 14. (*m*) Luke xxi. 26.

(n) *thou theſe great Buildings? there ſhall not be left one Stone upon another, which ſhall not be thrown down?* That may we ſay of this ancient Building of God the ſpacious Fabrick of this material World; *ſeeſt thou all theſe Things?* (o) The glorious Luminaries above, the Earth and the Sea beneath, the lofty Mountains and the laſting Hills, the Foreſts, Woods, and Groves, the ſtately Palaces, beautiful Churches, magnificent Houſes, and all the Monuments of Fame and Antiquity. *Seeſt thou theſe Things?* How beautiful and glorious ſoever they may appear to be now, they muſt all be included in the common Diſſolution, be all tumbled down and burn together, and ſo make a Part in the World's funeral Pile.

HERE then, if any where, we may ſee the Vanity and Tranſitorineſs of the World, which we ſo much doat on, when, by the Force of one Element, breaking looſe upon the reſt, all, that we admired and adored before, as great and magnificent, is obliterated and vaniſhed. "Where are now (as (p) the Author above-"cited aſks) the great Empire of the "World, and their imperial Cities, their "Pillars, Trophies, and Monuments of "Glory? Shew me where they ſtood: "read the Inſcription: tell me the Victor's "Name: what Remains, what Impreſſi-"ons, what Difference and Diſtinction do "you ſee in this Maſs of Fire? Nay, "not only the Cities, and Works of Men's "Hands, but the *everlaſting* Hills, the "Mountains, and Rocks of the Earth "are melted away, as Wax before the "Sun. Here ſtood the *Alps*, a prodi-"gious Range of Stone, that covered ma-"ny Countries. There the *African* Moun-"tains, and *Atlas*, with its Top above the "Clouds: yonder was the frozen *Cauca-"ſus*, and *Taurus*, and the Mountains of "*Aſia*; and, at a good Diſtance, towards "the *North*, ſtood the *Riphæan* Hills, "cloathed with Ice and Snow: all theſe "are vaniſhed, and dropped away, as the "Snow upon their Heads, and ſwallowed "up in a *Red Sea* of Fire."

And aſtoniſhes *the World.*

How then muſt the Wicked (q) *mourn like Doves, and roar like Bears,* when they ſhall ſee all the Objects, wherein they took Delight, all the Inſtruments of their Pleaſures, all the Riches and Glories of this World, which were the Fewel of their Luſts, ready to be turned into a devouring Fire to torment them? When they ſhall look for Mercy, but there is none, and *for Salvation, but it is far from them*; when Damnation ſhall ſtare them in the Face, and the intolerable Sentence is ready to be executed upon them, what Tongue can expreſs, what Mind can conceive the Violence of Agonies, they will then fall into, the Amazement and Exceſs of Horror, that will ſeize upon them? nothing but the Puniſhment itſelf can be more aſtoniſhing, than the dreadful Apprehenſion of it at ſo near a Diſtance.

SEEING therefore we cannot fail of ſtrong Conviction, both from the Conſent of all Ages, and the ſure Teſtimony of the Word of God, that the Things, which we ſee, and ſo much admire at preſent, ſhall be diſſolved, and (what muſt needs be a terrible Pomp and Solemnity to the laſt Judgment) all conſumed in one general Conflagration, (r) *what Manner of Perſons ought we to be in all holy Converſation and Godlineſs*, (s) *looking for the glorious Appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt*, and *diligently* endeavouring, *that we may be found of him in Peace, without Spot, and Blameleſs!*

The Recapitulation, *and* Uſes *of the whole.*

THUS much for the Expoſition of the *ſeventh* Article, *from thence he ſhall come to judge the quick and the dead*; wherein we profeſs to believe, "that our Lord "Jeſus Chriſt, who, in his human Na-"ture, is now *ſitting at the right "Hand of God*, ſhall, in that Nature, as "properly *qualified* to make Proceedings "viſible, at the Time appointed by the "divine Counſel, but utterly unknown "to us, deſcend again from Heaven, in "great Majeſty and *Glory*, to judge the "World, ſeated on a *radiant* Throne, "and attended by his mighty Angels, "not only to aggrandize his Train, and "the Solemnity of the Day, but to *ſum-"mon* all Mankind, thoſe that have died "in former Ages, as well as thoſe that "ſhall be found alive at his coming, to "appear before his dread Tribunal; that "*all*, both good and bad, appearing "in their proper Perſons, none ſo great "as to be excuſed, none ſo mean as to "be

(n) Mark xiii. 2. (o) *Johnſon's* Ser. Vol. I. (p) *Burnet's* Theory, Vol. II. (q) Iſa. lix, 11.
(r) 2 Pet. iii. 11. (s) Tit. ii. 13, 14.

" be overlooked, in this vaſt Aſſembly the " Angels ſhall be ordered to ſeparate the " *Righteous* from the *Wicked*, and to range " them in different *Claſſes*, in order to " receive their Trial; that the *Righte-* " *ous*, being called firſt, ſhall have all " their Faults and Failings, if truly re- " pented of, forgiven, and all their good " Actions, whether *publick* or *private*, " openly recognized, and ſo, receiving the " bleſſed Sentence of their Abſolution and " Happineſs, in Proportion to their Merit, " *ſhall be caught up to their Lord in the* " *Air, and be for ever with him*; and " that the *wicked* ſhall have all their " *hidden* Deeds of *Darkneſs* firſt expoſed " to open Light and Deteſtation; and then " receiving the Denunciation of their Con- " demnation and Miſery, in Proportion to " their Demerit, ſhall find it immediately " begin to be executed upon them in the " Fall and Conflagration of the World: " and the proper Effect of ſuch a Be- " lief ſhould be—To ſuſpend all *Doubts*, " and rectify our Notions concerning the " *Diſpenſations* of Providence in this Life, " ſince they are to be better regulated in an- " other; to make a ſtrict *Search* and Exa- " mination into our Lives, and every Day, " to judge ourſelves with ſuch *Impartiality*, " that we may not, to our Condemnation, " be *judged by the Lord*; to reſtrain our " *Cenſures* of other Men, and their Acti- " ons, and to refer every Thing to the " Determination of the laſt great Day; to " ſet a Guard upon our *Behaviour*, and to " take care of all our *Thoughts* and *Inten-* " *tions*, becauſe every *ſecret Thing* ſhall " then be diſcloſed; to keep our *Conſci-* " *ences void of all Offence*, becauſe they " are to be our *Witneſſes* before the Tribu- " nal of Heaven; to live in a continual " *Watchfulneſs*, and Preparation for the " Day of the Lord, leſt it come upon us " *unawares*; to poſſeſs our Mind with a " conſtant lively Senſe of his *tremendous* " Appearance, as the powerful Means to " prepare us for it; to have our *Peace* and " Reconciliation made with God, before " *we go hence*, becauſe by Death we are " conſigned to *Judgment*; and, when that " is done, to comfort ourſelves with the " Hope and Expectation of an happy " Doom, ſince he, who is our Brother, " our Redeemer, our Advocate, and In- " terceſſor, is to be our *Judge*."

CHAP. VIII.

ARTICLE VIII.

* I believe in the Holy Ghoſt.

The EXPOSITION.

The ſeveral Parts *of the Creed.*

THE great Deſign of all *Creeds*, and indeed, in ſome Meaſure, of the whole *Chriſtian Revelation*, is to (*a*) *make all Men ſee* (as the *Apoſtle* expreſſes it) *what is the Fellowſhip of the Myſtery, which, from the Beginning of the World, has been hid in God*, (*b*) *but is now made manifeſt to the Saints*, viz. the Subſiſtence of three *diſtinct Perſons* in one and the ſame *divine Nature*. The *Creed*, we may obſerve, is divided into *three* principal Parts; our Belief in God the *Father*, the *Maker* of all Things; our Belief in God the *Son*, the *Redeemer* of all Mankind; and our Belief in God the *Holy Ghoſt*, the *Sanctifier* of all good Men: for, (*c*) *as there are Diverſities of Operations, but it is the ſame God*; and, *as there are Differences of Adminiſtrations, but it is the ſame Lord*; ſo *alſo there are Diverſities of Gifts, but the ſame Spirit, who divideth to every one ſeverally as he will.* This, together with ſome ſpecial Privileges relating to the Church of *Chriſt*, is the Sum and Subſtance of the *Apoſtles* Creed, and, in the Explanation of this *Article*, (after expounding the Terms, whereof it is compoſed,) I think it will be ſufficient, to make a ſhort *Enquiry* into the *Nature* and *Offices* of this bleſſed Spirit, ſo far as we are guided by the Light of Scripture.

The Meaning of the Word Ghoſt or *Spirit.*

THE Word *Ghoſt* (which is of *Saxon* Extract, and, in that Language, pronounced *Gaſt*) does primarily ſignify *Wind* or Breath. Now Wind, though not the Object of *Sight*, yet, of all inviſible natural Beings, having the greateſt *Force* and Activity, is therefore, by Way of *Analogy*, put to ſignify thoſe excellent *Intelligences*, which, by Reaſon of the *Purity* of their Nature, being not ſubjected to Senſe, and yet, by their manifeſt *Operations* abundantly diſcovering their Power and Energy, are therefore called *Spirits*. Of theſe, the *Principal* is Almighty God, who pervades and actuates all Things; next the *Angels*; and then the *Souls* of Men: But there is one *Being*, we muſt obſerve, to which the Scriptures, in a more peculiar Manner, aſcribe *that* Name, calling him the *Spirit of God*, the *Spirit of Chriſt*, the good *Spirit*, *the holy Spirit*, and ſometimes, by Way of Eminence, *the Spirit*, not improbably, either from the Manner of his *Proceſſions* from the other two Perſons in the bleſſed Trinity, or from the Manner of his *Operation* upon the Souls of Men, either of which may perhaps bear ſome Reſemblance to *Spiration*, for which Reaſon our Saviour, in ſpeaking of the Doctrine of *Regeneration*, might very probably make Uſe of that Compariſon, (*d*) *the Wind bloweth where it liſteth, and thou heareſt the Sound thereof, but canſt not tell whence it cometh, or whither it goeth, ſo is every Man, that is born of the Spirit.*

Why ſaid to be holy.

AND from hence we may learn, that he is ſtiled the *holy Spirit*, not ſo much in Reference to his *eſſential* Purity, which he has in common with the other two Perſons, as he is *God*, as in Regard of his being the Author and Promoter of all *Holineſs* in us, by enlightning our *Underſtandings*, impreſſing good Thoughts upon our *Minds*, inclining our *Wills*, regulating our *Paſſions* and

* This Article has always been Part of the Creed, and is *coeval* with Chriſtianity, and the Adminiſtration of *Baptiſm*, as appears from the very Form of Baptiſm, the Ground and Foundation of the *Creed*, which is to be ſolemnized, not only in the Name of the *Father* and the *Son*, but alſo of the *Holy Ghoſt*, where the Holy Ghoſt is joined with the Father and the Son: And hence *Didymus*, in his ſecond Book *de Spiritu Sancto*, thus argues. *Who will not conclude for the Equality of the ſacred Trinity, ſeeing there is but one Faith in the Father, Son, and holy Ghoſt, and Baptiſm is given in the Name of all three? I do not think, that any Man will be ſo fooliſh and mad, as to imagine, that Baptiſm to be perfect, which is given in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, without the Addition of the Holy Ghoſt.* Crit. Hiſtory of the Creed.

(*a*) Eph. iii. 9. (*b*) Col. i. 26. (*c*) 1 Cor. xii. 4, &c. (*d*) John iii. 8.

and *Affections*, and, in ſhort, doing all Kind of good Offices, that are conducive to the *Sanctification* of our Souls. Now as all theſe Operations are ſure Indications of his Divinity, it is for this Reaſon, that the Words * *I believe in*, which ſtand at the *Head* of the Creed, are here repeated again, rather than before the Article, that treats of the *ſecond Perſon*, not ſo much to relieve our Memories, after the Intervention of ſo many Particulars concerning the Son, as becauſe the *Divinity*, as well as *Perſonality* of the Holy Ghoſt did meet (though not at firſt, † yet afterwards) with greater Oppoſition, than either the divine Nature or *perſonal* Subſiſtence of the Son, in the Unity of the Godhead. By this Addition therefore (for it is not thus in all ancient Creeds) we profeſs to believe, not only that there is an Holy Ghoſt, but that he is truly and *eſſentially* God, and that we ought therefore to pay him the ſame Duties of Love, and Hope, and Adoration, *&c.* as are ſuppoſed incumbent on us, when, in the firſt Article, we profeſs to *believe in God the Father*; for ſuch is the Senſe of our Church concerning him, *viz.* (*e*) *That the Holy Ghoſt, proceeding from the Father and the Son, is of one Subſtance, Majeſty and Glory with the Father and the Son, very, and eternal God.* And this will lead us to enquire a little into the Nature of this divine Perſon.

And we to believe in him.

Now if a *Perſon* may not improperly be defin'd *a Being, that ſubſiſts by a Power inherent in itſelf, and is endued likewiſe with Reaſon and Freedom of Will*, when we read of the Holy Ghoſt's (*f*) *coming*, and being (*g*) *ſent*; coming in the Name of one Perſon, and being ſent on a Meſſage from another, of his *ſpeaking*, (*h*) *hearing, receiving, teſtifying, reproving, and inſtructing*; of his *ſearching, guiding, aſſiſting, reminding*, and performing the Office of *another Comforter*; of ſome Mens (*i*) *tempting, lying to*, and (*k*) *blaſpheming* him, and of others being (*l*) *baptized in his Name*, (*m*) *ſeparated* and conſecrated to him, and called by him to the *Works of the Miniſtry*, for which (*n*) he *divideth* his Gifts to *every Man ſeverally as he will*: When we read of theſe, I ſay, and many more Actions of the like Nature aſcribed to the *Holy Ghoſt*, we think we have found a convincing Proof of his *Perſonality*, becauſe we cannot imagine it a Thing conſiſtent with the *Simplicity* of Scripture, or reconcileable with the infinite *Goodneſs* of God himſelf, thus conſtantly to repreſent the Holy Ghoſt as a *Perſon*, if he be not one, and to lay us under little leſs than a Neceſſity of forming falſe Ideas and wrong Conceptions of him.

That he is a Perſon.

In like Manner, when we read of his (*o*) *guiding into all Truth*, (*p*) his teaching all Things, (*q*) ſearching the deep Things of

A divine *Perſon.*

* To *believe in* a Perſon, is, in the Language of Scripture, and the Church, to *believe him to be God:* And therefore when, in the *fourth Century*, the *Oppoſers* of the Divinity of the Holy Ghoſt argued from the *Silence* of the Fathers of the Council of *Nice*, and concluded, that becauſe they did not, in their Creed in expreſs Terms, declare the Holy Ghoſt to be *God*, that therefore they did not eſteem him to be God: It was urged by the *Catholicks*, that, *although there was no great Mention made of the Holy Ghoſt therein, becauſe there was no Controverſy then about him, and that* Synod *principally inſiſted upon the Articles of Faith relating to the Divinity of the Son, which, at that Time, were impugned by* Arius *and his Followers; yet, nevertheleſs, there was ſufficient ſaid of him, to declare him to be God, in that, as we are directed by the Creed not only ſimply to believe the Father, and the Son, but* in *the Father, and* in *the Son, terminating our Faith upon them; ſo alſo we are obliged, in the like Manner, to believe* in *the Holy Ghoſt.* Where we may obſerve, that the Diſtinction between *believing*, and *believing in*, is very *material*, ſince the *primitive* Writers laid ſuch Streſs upon it, as thence to conclude, and prove, the Divinity of the Holy Ghoſt. Crit. Hiſt. of the Creed, and *Stephens* on the Perſ. and Divin. of the Holy Ghoſt.

† Not only the *Arians* maintained that the Holy Ghoſt was a *Creature* of the Son's, and, conſequently, according to their Doctrine, a Creature created by a Creature; but the *Macedonians*, (a ſect ſo called from their Leader *Macedonius*, firſt a Preſbyter, and afterwards Biſhop of *Conſtantinople*,) adventured to carry this Hereſy to a more deſperate Height, by affirming, that the Holy Ghoſt was not only a *Creature* but a *miniſtring* Creature, i. e. *miniſtring Spirit*, differing from the *Angels*, only in *Degree*, and therefore not poſſeſſed of any Powers or Attributes, that could denominate him divine. Againſt theſe *Hereticks* (who for their Zeal againſt the Divinity of the Holy Ghoſt were called by a Greek Name, which ſignifies *Fighters or Contenders with the Spirit*) was the *ſecond* general Council aſſembled at *Conſtantinople*, where the Fathers took Care to guard and defend both the divine Nature, and Attributes of the Holy Ghoſt, by making this Addition to the *Nicene* Creed. *That he is the Lord and Giver of Life, who proceedeth from the Father, who with the Father and Son together, is worſhiped, and glorified, who ſpake by the Prophets.* *Wheatley* on the Creeds.

(*e*) Art. 5. (*f*) Vid. John Ch. xiv. xv. and xvi. paſſim. (*g*) Acts x. 19. and xiii. 2. (*h*) Vid. John ibid. (*i*) Acts v. 3, 9. (*k*) Matt. xii. 31. (*l*) Matt. xxviii. 19. (*m*) Acts xiii. 2. (*n*) 1 Cor. xii. 11. (*o*) John xvi. 13. (*p*) Ver. 26. (*q*) 1 Cor. ii. 11.

of God, in (r) *helping our Infirmities, and making Interceſſion for us*; of (s) his working *Miracles*, his *diſcerning of Spirits*, (t) his inſpiring the *Meſſiah*, (u) his ſpeaking by the *Prophets*, his (x) renewing and (y) ſanctifying, his (z) *changing us into the Image of* Chriſt; and making regenerate Chriſtians become the (a) *living Temples of God*: And when, in Acceſſion to all this, we obſerve farther, that the ſame divine *Attributes* of (b) *Eternity, Omniſcience*, and *Omnipotence*, &c. the ſame divine *Operations* of (b) *Creation*, (c) *Renovation of Mens Minds*, and (d) *Reſurrection of their Bodies*, &c.) The ſame divine *Honour* as appears by St. *Paul's* (e) Benediction to the *Corinthians*, and the ſame divine Titles, as St. *Peter's* (f) Increpation of *Ananias* ſufficiently teſtifies, are aſcribed to the *bleſſed Spirit*, in common with the other two divine Perſons; from ſuch plain Scripture Indications, I ſay, we are abundantly warranted to infer, that he is not only a Perſon, but a *divine* Perſon likewiſe, of the ſame Eſſence, Majeſty, and Glory with the Father and the Son.

Diſtinct *from the Father and Son.*

BUT then, when we read, at the ſame Time, that he is (g) the Spirit of the Father, and the (h) Spirit of the Son both; that (i) he proceeds from the Father, is ſent by the Father, and (k) *intercedes for us with the Father*; and that (l) *he received of the Son, was ſent by him, and teſtified of him*; that he (m) begat him in the Womb of the *Virgin*, (n) deſcended on him at his *Baptiſm*, and conducted him in the State of his Humiliation, &c. we muſt needs be convinced, that, though he be a divine Perſon, he is nevertheleſs a Perſon diſtinct both from the Father and the Son: And indeed, were it not to diſtinguiſh them from each other, why are we baptized in (o) his *Name* as well as in the Name of the *Father* and *Son*? Why, upon his Deſcent on the Son in a bodily Shape, does his Father from Heaven (p) declare his Aſſent and Approbation of him? Why does the bleſſed Apoſtle pray, at one and the ſame Time, for *the Grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and the Love of God the Father, and the Fellowſhip of the Holy Ghoſt*? And why indeed, in the great Work of Man's Redemption, is there a diſtinct Office and Operation appropriated to each of them, inſomuch that the (q) *Father* is only ſaid to *elect* or *predeſtinate*, the Son only to have *ſhed his Blood*, and the Holy Ghoſt only to *ſanctify unto Obedience*? This certainly is to diſcriminate them from each other: And therefore ſince the Scriptures do every where teſtify, that there is *one*, and but one God only, we cannot avoid concluding, that as the Holy Ghoſt is properly a Perſon, a divine Perſon, and a Perſon diſtinct from both Father and Son, that much diſputed Text does from hence receive no ſmall Authority and Confirmation, (r) *there are three that bear Record in Heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghoſt, and theſe three are one*, one Eſſence, one Subſtance, one God. And indeed if the Holy Ghoſt were not God, in the higheſt *Perfection* of the divine Nature, (s) we cannot ſee how he can be qualified to be Chriſt's *Vice-gerent* here on Earth in the Rule and Government of his Church, which conſiſts in the Exerciſe of ſuch *Functions* and Operations, as are deſigned to produce in us good Diſpoſitions towards Virtue, to mollify our Hearts, to ſanctify our Affections, to quicken and excite us, to comfort and ſupport us in the Ways of Godlineſs, and, in ſhort, to inform, actuate, and enliven the whole Body of Chriſtians wherever diſperſed over the whole Face of the Earth. But now what leſs than an *Almighty* Power can be ſufficient for theſe Things? Since the Souls and Hearts of Men are the *Subjects* of this Government, a perfect *Intimacy*, and thorough Acquaintance with our Thoughts and Intentions is indiſpenſably requiſite to one, who, by his Office, is to guide and conduct them, for which Purpoſe he muſt be *omniſcient*; and then to govern all thoſe external Events, whereby our Paſſions are moved, and our Inclinations conceived, as well as to diſpoſe ſuch a Variety of *Accidents*, as relate to ſuch infinite Numbers of Men, ſo diſtant and remote in Time, Place, Temper, and Condition,

And yet equally God.

(r) Rom. viii. 26. (s) Matt xii. 28. (t) Luke iv. 18. (u) Acts xxviii. 25.
(x) Tit. iii. 5. (y) Rom. xv. 16. (z) 2 Cor. iii. 18. (a) 2 Cor. vi. 16. (b) Heb. ix. 14
(c) Tit. iii. 5. (d) Rom. viii. 11. (e) 2 Cor. xiii. 13. (f) Acts v. 3, 4. (g) Matt. x. 20.
(h) Gal. iv. 6. (i) John xv. 26. (k) Rom. viii. 26. (l) John xvi. 14. and xv. 26.
(m) Matt. i. 18. (n) Matt. iii. 16. (o) Matt. xxviii. 19. (p) Matt. iii. 17. (q) 1 Pet. i. 2.
(r) 1 John v. 7. (s) *Stephens* of the Perſonality &c. of the Holy Ghoſt.

dition, muſt require a Power *infinite*, an *univerſal* Preſence, and every other Perfection, that is inherent in the Godhead.

By Way of Proceſſion.

For theſe Reaſons it muſt be allowed, that the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, in all Conſiderations relating to the divine Nature, are *equal*, ſo that, with Regard to *Time*, or *Power*, or any other Perfection, none is greater, or leſs than another, and yet in *Dignity* and *Order* of Relation there is ſome Difference. The Father in this Regard is *Supreme*, becauſe the Original, the Source, the Root of the Godhead: A Godhead, from all Eternity communicated to the *Son*, who is therefore acknowledged to be the *ſecond* Perſon, and from both Father and Son, by an eternal *Proceſſion*, communicated to the *Holy Ghoſt*, who is therefore the *third Perſon* in the ever bleſſed *Trinity:* But in what Manner this *Proceſſion*, or Emanation of the Deity, from the other two Perſons jointly to the Holy Ghoſt, is effected, this is a Myſtery (as I ſaid before) too profound, for Man to penetrate, or diſtinctly to conceive; only we may obſerve, that, in Conformity to Scripture, there is ſome Foundation for a Diſtinction between a *Generation* and *Proceſſion* in this great *Myſtery* of communicating the divine Eſſence. For, ſince the *ſecond* Perſon is ſtiled the *Son*, it ſeems more ſuitable to that *Relation*, and our common Way of conceiving the Foundation of it, that he ſhould be ſaid to be *generated*; and ſince the *Holy Ghoſt* is repreſented to us under the Name and Character of a *Spirit*, it is more agreeable to our conceiving the Manner of his ſubſiſting in the Godhead, that it ſhould be by Way of Proceſſion or *Spiration:* And, as he is the *third* Perſon, it is more reaſonable again for us to ſuppoſe, that he ſhould derive his Divinity from both the other Perſons, and that the Son, being the *ſecond* Perſon, ſhould derive it from the Father *only*.

Thus far, and no farther the Scripture leads us into the Knowledge of the Nature of that bleſſed Spirit, which our Saviour, in his Abſence, ſent to ſupply his Place in the *Government* of his Church; and in what *Manner* he executes that Office, ſo as to deſerve the Epithet of being *holy*, a ſhort Enquiry into the ſame Scriptures will inform us.

His various and different Gifts.

Manifold and various are the Gifts, and Adminiſtrations, which the *Holy Ghoſt*, in the Execution of his *Office*, beſtows upon the *Church* of Chriſt: *for* (*t*) *to one is given by the Spirit the Word of Wiſdom; to another the Word of Knowledge by the ſame Spirit; to another Faith, and to another the Gifts of healing by the ſame Spirit; to another the working of Miracles, to another Prophecy, to another diſcerning of Spirits, to another divers Kinds of Tongues, and to another the Interpretation of Tongues.* It is difficult, in our Days, to know the *preciſe* Meaning of theſe ſeveral Gifts, or to aſſign the *Difference*, which diſcriminates them from each other. In the firſt Ages of the Church, when theſe Gifts were common, their Signification was better underſtood; but now it is no wonder, that, as the Things themſelves have a long while ceaſed, the Terms, in which they were expreſſed, are not ſo eaſy to be explained. This only we know for certain, that the Operations of Spirit are ſome *extraordinary*, ſome *ordinary*; ſome *ſpecial* to ſome particular Times and Perſons, others *common* to all Chriſtians in all Ages; ſome *neceſſary* for the firſt planting of the Goſpel, others *requiſite* to the ſpiritual Growth of true Believers; ſome *miraculous Powers*, by which, thoſe, that were furniſhed with them, were qualified to promote the Salvation of other Men, and others *ſaving Graces*, by which, thoſe, that were Partakers of them, are enabled to *work out their own Salvation:* The *former* ſuch, as we ought to thank God, for his having beſtow'd them upon his Apoſtles and others, in order to the more effectual and ſpeedy Propagation of his true Religion: The *latter* ſuch, as we ought conſtantly to implore of God, as neceſſary to diſpoſe our *Underſtandings* to apprehend, our *Wills* to obey, and our Affections to entertain the ſaving Truths, and Precepts of the Goſpel.

To ſpeak Variety of *Languages*, that thereby the firſt Planters of Chriſtianity might be able to propagate it with more Expedition and Succeſs: To work Variety of *Miracles*, thereby to confirm the Truth of their Doctrine, and to teſtify to the World, that they were in Reality *Teachers ſent from God:* To be fully *inſtructed* in the Doctrines, they were to teach, as the ſure *Standard* of Truth or Falſhood to all ſucceeding Generations: To be ſafely

Thoſe that were extraordinary, *and for a Time only.*

(*t*) 1 Cor. xii. 8, &c.

conducted, by infallible Advice, through all the emergent Exigences of their *Miniſtry*: To be poſſeſſed of a *Faith*, that no Doubts or Difficulties could ſtagger; a *Reſolution*, that no Hazards or Dangers could daunt; a *Courage*, that no Pain or Sufferings could overcome; and a *Command of Expreſſion*, and Force of Reaſoning, that all their *Adverſaries were not able to gainſay*: Theſe were the Qualifications requiſite in the firſt Preachers of the Goſpel; and theſe God was pleaſed, in a moſt plentiful Meaſure, to beſtow upon (*u*) *his Apoſtles, his Prophets, his Evangeliſts, his Paſtors and Teachers, for the perfecting of the Saints, for the Work of the Miniſtry, for the edifying the Body of Chriſt.*

When withdrawn.

How long theſe *wonderful* Gifts continued in the *Chriſtian* Church, we have no certain Account upon Record. The Apoſtle indeed has acquainted us, that they were only to laſt for a determinate Seaſon, for (*x*) *whether they be Propheſies*, ſays he, *they ſhall fail; whether there be Tongues, they ſhall ceaſe; whether there be Knowledge, it ſhall vaniſh away*; and therefore we may preſume, that when ſeveral Nations had received the Goſpel of Chriſt, and the firſt *Converts*, who were *Natives*, and could preach to their Countrymen in their own Language, were every where ordained to the *Work of the Miniſtry*, then was the *Gift of Tongues* withdrawn: That, when the *Truth* of Chriſtianity was ſufficiently atteſted by *Signs and mighty Wonders*, and the *Frauds* and Impoſtures of the *heathen* Worſhip detected by the manifold Triumphs of Chriſt's Power over their *Idols*, then was the *Gift of Miracles* diſcontinued: That, when the *Canon* of the New Teſtament was compleated, and the ſeveral Parts of it *collected* into one Volume, and diſtributed to all the Churches, then did the *Gift of Revelation ceaſe*; and that, when the *Government* of the Church was every where eſtabliſhed, the Fire of *Perſecution* extinguiſhed, a conſtant *Miniſtry* ſettled, and all things reduced to a *ſtated* Courſe and Order, then was this *immediate Conduct* of the holy Ghoſt ſupereeded, and that *Inſpiration* of Power, of Fortitude, of Eloquence, and ſtrong Reaſoning, for which the *Primitives* were ſo remarkable upon all Occaſions, by degrees abated, and Chriſtians, in time, left to what we call the *ordinary* Operations of the Spirit, ſuch as are *permanent* to the End of the World, communicated to Perſons in all Ages, and highly conducive to the great Work of their *Salvation*.

Thoſe that are ordinary, *and for ever to continue*; *ſuch as* Illumination.

For the holy Ghoſt, we muſt obſerve, as he is a *Divine* Perſon, has an *immediate* Acceſs to our Souls, and can operate upon them whenever, or what ever he pleaſes: And though we cannot account for his preciſe manner of working, yet ſince we are aſſured that (*y*) *of ourſelves we are not ſufficient to think any Thing as of ourſelves, but all our Sufficiency is of God*, we cannot but conclude, that it is by his *Operation* that the *Evidences* of our holy Religion are impreſſed upon our Minds; that we have any competent Knowledge (*z*) *of ſuch things, as to other Men are Fooliſhneſs, becauſe they are ſpiritually diſcerned*; and that (*a*) *the Eyes of our Underſtanding are* ſo *enlightened*, as *to know*, in ſome meaſure, *what is the Hope* of God's *calling*, and *what the Riches of the Glory of his Inheritance in the Saints*. It is by his *powerful Suggeſtions*, that our ſtubborn *Wills* are perſuaded, our hard Hearts mollified, our wild Affections reduced to a ready Compliance with the Divine Pleaſure, and our whole inward Man (as it happens at every one's Converſion) tranſformed into new Notions, new Savours, new Acts, new Aims, new Joys, as if we were entirely *new Creatures*, and deſcended from another *Race*: It is by his kind *Infuſions* that all good Diſpoſitions, at firſt, take Poſſeſſion of our Souls, and being planted and watered by the ſame Hand, do, in Time, under his Care and Influence, produce the bleſſed Increaſe of (*b*) *Love, Joy, Peace, Long-ſuffering, Gentleneſs, Goodneſs, Faith, Meekneſs, Temperance*, theſe *Nine*, and many more, which are plainly declared to be *the Fruits of the Spirit*. It is by his *Excitation*, that, when we grow remiſs, and languiſh in our Duty, we are quickened up again into freſh Motion and Activity, and, by ſuch Conſiderations, as are apt to allure our *Hope*, alarm our *Fear*, and affect our *Ingenuity*, ſuch as repreſent the Horror of a *Relapſe*, and the Reward and Glory of *Perſeverance*, make us (*c*) *lift up the Hands, that hang down, and the feeble Knees, and ſo* (*d*) *run with Patience the Race that is ſet before us*. It is by his *Conſolations*, that ſome-

Santification.

Spiritual Grace.

Excitation.

Conſolation.

(*u*) Eph. iv. 11, 12. (*x*) 1 Cor. xiii. 8. (*y*) 2 Cor. iii. 5. (*z*) 1 Cor. ii. 14. (*a*) Eph. i. 18.
(*b*) Gal. v. 22, 23. (*c*) Heb. xii. 12. (*d*) Ver. 1.

ſometimes in their difficult Undertakings, ſometimes in their Conflict with Temptations, ſometimes under the Preſſure of great Afflictions, and ſometimes in the Hour and Extremities of Death, Men find ſuch hidden Springs of Joy and Comfort flowing in upon them, as make them bear up with Chearfulneſs, encounter Difficulties with Alacrity, deſpiſe Adverſity, and endure Pain with a Kind of *Inſenſibility*, (*d*) *being filled with Joy and Peace in believing, and abounding in Hope through the Power of the Holy Ghoſt*; and, laſtly, it is by his *Inſpiration*, that ſuch *Affections* are kindled in our Hearts, as are proper to the ſeveral Parts of *Prayer*, ſuch as *Shame* and Sorrow, in the *Confeſſion* of our Sins; a *Senſe* of our Need of Mercy, in our *Supplication* for Pardon and Forgiveneſs; *Reſignation* to the divine Will in our *Addreſs* for *temporal* Mercies; *Vehemence* of Deſire, in our Petitions for God's *Grace* and Aſſiſtance, and, in a Word, *Gratitude*, and Love, and Admiration of him, in our *Praiſes* and Thankſgivings for his *Benefactions*. In theſe Affections does the very Soul and Spirit of Prayer conſiſt: but then, becauſe, in our depraved State of Nature, we are not endued with theſe, (*e*) *God hath ſent the Spirit of his Son into our Hearts, crying, Abba, Father!* i. e. by the Predictions of ſuch pious and devout Graces in our Souls, he enables us to approach God, as a kind and merciful Father; and becauſe (*f*) *we know not what we ſhould pray for as we ought, the Spirit itſelf maketh Interceſſion for us, according to the Will of God, with Groans which cannot be uttered.* Thus does the *holy Ghoſt*, by reaching all Caſes, and providing for all Exigences, verify the Character of the *Prophet*, and even in its *common* Operations fully approve itſelf, (*g*) *the Spirit of Wiſdom and Underſtanding, the Spirit of Counſel and Might, the Spirit of Knowledge and of the Fear of the Lord.* For here is *Wiſdom* for thoſe that teach, and *Underſtanding* for thoſe that learn: *Counſel*, for ſuch as are in Perplexity, and *Might* for ſuch as are in Difficulties; *Knowledge*, for them that err, and the *Fear of the Lord*, or *Piety* (as other Verſions read it) for all that will be *pious* and devout. And (*h*) *therefore if any Man thirſt* (as our Saviour ſtood in the Temple and cried) *let him come unto me and drink*, for *he that believeth in me, as the Scripture hath ſaid, out of his Belly ſhall flow Rivers of living Water.*

And the Affections *of* Prayer.

The OBJECTION.

" BUT, before we lay ſuch a *Multi-*
" *tude* of Buſineſs upon the *holy Ghoſt*,
" we ought to be well ſatisfied, whether
" there is ſuch a Perſon or no. Mention in-
" deed is frequently made of him in the ho-
" ly Scriptures, but then it is under the No-
" tion of a Power, a Virtue, an Operation,
" or Attribute of God; for (*i*) God properly
" is the Perſon, who, by his *Spirit*, *i. e.* by
" his Power and Efficacy, acts and operates
" upon Mankind. And indeed were it not
" ſo, (*k*) how could the Spirit be ſaid to be
" *given ſometimes in Meaſure, and ſometimes*
" *without Meaſure, to be diſtributed, to be*
" *poured out, or taken away, and ſometimes*
" *quenched, or quite extinguiſhed. Perſonal*
" Actions, we do allow, are commonly
" aſcribed to him, but are they not likewiſe
" attributed to Things, that we all acknow-
" ledge can be no Perſons? for is not *Sin*
" (*l*) ſaid *to ſlay and deceive us*, and (*m*) *Cha-*
" *rity to ſuffer long and be kind?* and
" yet, it is manifeſt, that theſe are no
" Perſons, that the Expreſſions, conſe-
" quently, muſt be *figurative*, and that
" the ſame Form of Interpretation is there-
" fore allowable in the Caſe before us.
" But allowing him to be a *Perſon*, will
" it therefore follow, that he muſt im-
" mediately become a *divine Perſon?* Our
" bleſſed Saviour, in his laſt Diſcourſe
" with his Diſciples, entertains them with
" theſe Words—(*n*) *I will ſend the Com-*
" *forter to you from the Father, who will*
" *guide you into all Truth, for he ſhall*
" *not ſpeak of himſelf, but whatever he*
" *ſhall hear, that ſhall he ſpeak, and he*
" *ſhall glorify me, for he ſhall receive of*
" *mine, and ſhew it unto you.* And do
" not theſe Words deſcribe an *inferior*
" Kind

(*d*) Rom. xv. 13. (*e*) Gal. iv. 6. (*f*) Rom. viii. 26, 27. (*g*) Iſai. xi. 2. (*h*) John vii. 37, 38. (*i*) Socini Epiſt. 3. and Petrum Statorium. (*k*) Catech. Racov. Cap. 6. Queſt. 12. (*l*) Rom. vii. 11. (*m*) 1 Cor. xiii. 4. (*n*) John xv. 26. and xvi. 13, 14.

" Kind of Being, or an *Agent*, ſo ſtrictly " limited and confined by the Orders, that " are given him, that he has no Power " or Authority inherent in himſelf, but " is obliged to tranſact every Thing, ac- " cording to the *Inſtructions* of thoſe, that " grant him his *Commiſſion*; and can this " be truly ſaid of a Perſon of the ſame " Equality with the Father? For that he " has any Part of his Exiſtence from the " Son has been a ſtrong Controverſy in " the Church. To *be ſent*, and *to re-* " *ceive*, do certainly imply our *Inferio-* " *rity* to the Perſon by whom we are " ſent, or from whom we receive; and " upon the Suppoſition of the like Inferi- " ority in the holy Ghoſt, (as his Offices " ſeem to denote) he muſt either be re- " duced to the *Level* of a Creature, or " paſs only for a *Power* or *Attribute* of " God, exerting itſelf in ſuch and ſuch " Operations. And indeed if he be really " and truly God, how came it to paſs " that (*p*) *the Diſciples at Epheſus* had *ne-* " *ver* once *heard that there* was any ſuch " Thing as *the holy Ghoſt?* And that in " the whole Compaſs of Scripture, both " *old* and *new*, he is not ſo much as " once plainly mentioned under that Ap- " pellation? For it is a violent Force put " upon the (*q*) Words of St. *Peter to* " *Ananias*, when we labour to extort " from them a Confeſſion of his Divi- " nity. But allowing his *Divinity* to be " true, the leſs is our *Reaſon* to expect, " that he ſhould be ſo ſubſervient to our " Purpoſes, as to guide and direct every " Faculty of our Minds, to attend every " Motion of our Hearts, check every Evil, " cheriſh every good Thought, and ac- " commodate his Application to the Ex- " igence of every Man's State and Con- " dition. This he might do perhaps in " the *primitive* Times of Chriſtianity, " when his Gifts were ſo numerous, and " the Lives of Men remarkably virtu- " ous; but now we ſeem to be deſtitute " of ſuch Aids, and left to the outward " Diſpenſation of God's Word, and the " Exerciſe of our own Reaſon in the " Matter of our Converſion and Sancti- " fication. *Grace* indeed is a Word, that " we hear a great deal of, but we " cannot directly tell what it means; in " what *Manner* it acts; wherein its *Ne-* " *ceſſity* lies; or what real *Service* it can " do us, ſince, by a diligent Attention " to the Word of God, and the Opera- " tions of our own Minds, we cannot but " diſcern what is fit and proper for us " to do and avoid, without any foreign " Light or Aſſiſtance. For (*r*) are not " the *Amiableneſs* and Advantages of *Good*, " and the *Deformity* and Miſchiefs of " *Evil* obvious to every conſidering Man, " and needs he, in Caſes of this Kind, any " ſupernatural *Infuſion* to determine his " Choice? All that he ſeems to need is, " that he do not deſert the Uſe of thoſe " *Powers* and Faculties, that Nature has " given him, which he is in manifeſt " Danger of doing, when once he devotes " himſelf to the uncertain Conduct of " Grace."

Anſwered by ſhewing that the holy Ghoſt *is ſometimes put for its* Gifts.

(*s*) We acknowledge indeed, that, in the holy *Scriptures*, ſeveral Things are attributed to the bleſſed Spirit, which confeſſedly do not belong to a Perſon; but then, we cannot but obſerve, that, in the ſame Scriptures, the Spirit is frequently put for the *Gifts* and Graces, of which he is the Author and Beſtower. When therefore we find him ſpoken of as *encreaſed or diminiſhed, given in Meaſure, or without Meaſure, as poured out, diſtributed, or extinguiſhed*; ſuch Paſſages as theſe are to be applied to the *Gifts of the holy Ghoſt*, which are capable of Increaſe, or Diminution, of Variety, or Change, of Beginning or Ending, but not of the *Giver* of them, who is the ſame God, uncapable of any Change; who always was, always will be what he is; who never began to exiſt, and ſhall never be extinguiſhed. This is an eaſy *Diſtinction*, which ſolves all the Difficulties of this Kind, and is the rather worthy of Acceptation, becauſe it is laid down in the Word of God, and, particularly, in that remarkable Paſſage to the *Corinthians*, where (*t*) after a ſpecial Enumeration of the manifold Graces of the Spirit, the Apoſtle plainly diſtinguiſhes the Gift from the Giver, for (*u*) *all theſe*, ſays he, *worketh that one and the ſelf ſame Spirit, dividing to every Man ſeverally as he will.* Since therefore moſt of the Texts, relating to the holy Ghoſt, which ſeem to have this *Ambiguity* in them, are to be underſtood not of his *Perſon*, but of his

(*p*) Acts xix. 2. (*q*) Acts v. 3, 4. (*r*) *Young's* Ser. Vol. I. (*s*) *Smalridge's* Ser.
(*t*) 1 Cor. xii. 8. (*u*) Ver. 11.

his *Operations* only, and of thoſe ſingular Gifts and Graces, which are ſubmitted to his Diſpenſation, what Reaſon have we to doubt, but that he, who, in all other Places, is ſpoken of, as real Perſons are wont to be ſpoken of; to whom ſuch Actions are aſcribed, as uſe not to be aſcribed to any but Perſons; and of whom the like Things are ſaid, as are of the Father and the Son, is as properly a Perſon, as the Father or the Son? For, can any thinking Man impartially conſider that gracious Promiſe of our Saviour's, (*x*) *I will pray the Father, and he ſhall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever, even the Spirit of Truth*; and, at the ſame Time, perſuade himſelf, (*y*) that the *Father*, to whom Chriſt prayed, that he would *ſend another Comforter*, is a *Perſon*, that he, who *prays to the Father* to ſend another Comforter, is a *Perſon*; and yet, that this other Comforter, ſent by the Father, through the Interceſſion of the Son, is not a Perſon, but a Quality; not the *Giver* of Comfort, but the *Gift*; not *another Comforter*, beſides the Father, and the Son, but the *Conſolation* beſtowed by the Father on Believers, at the Requeſt of the Son?

Its Perſonality plainly proved,

and the Abſurdity of the contrary Suppoſition.

When we read the holy Scriptures, our Buſineſs is to give them the *Conſtruction*, that they naturally bear, and, above all Things, to take care, that we do not make the Word of God ſpeak *Nonſenſe*; and therefore, when we find not only *perſonal* Actions, but *Affections* likewiſe, and Faculties *purely perſonal* aſcribed to the *holy Ghoſt*; when he is ſaid, not only to be (*z*) grieved, vexed, and provoked, but to have a *Will*, (*a*) *Wiſdom*, and *Underſtanding* likewiſe; here is no Room left for the Subterfuge of a *Proſopopœia*: for (*b*) what, but an *intelligent* Being, can be ſubject to *Grief*, and *Provoation*, *Will* and *Underſtanding*? And who does not perceive, that to attribute Grief to a *Quality*, Provocation to an *Efficacy*, Will to a *Gift*, or Underſtanding to an *Attribute* is monſtrouſly abſurd, and repugnant to the common Senſe of Mankind? Sometimes indeed the Scripture may, in Matters leſs abſtruſe and high, make uſe of ſuch *Schemes* of Speech, in order to give the greater Strength and *Emphaſis* of its Expreſſion; and therefore, when the Apoſtle tells his *Corinthians*, in that remarkable Strain of *Oratory*, that (*c*) *Charity ſuffers long and is kind, Charity envieth not, Charity vaunteth not itſelf*, &c. a Child may perceive, that thereby he means a Perſon endued with that excellent Quality, and that his Intent, in expreſſing himſelf in the *Concrete*, is only to give *Life* and Strength, as well as *Grace* and Ornament to his divine Eloquence: but to argue from thence, that the holy Ghoſt is no more than a *divine Quality*, or *Energy* inherent in the Father, and exhibiting itſelf on various Occaſions, is both *incongruous*, and *unſcriptural*. For when we read of the holy Ghoſt's being *ſent by the Son, ſpeaking not of himſelf, receiving Power from the Son*, and glorifying the Son with that Power &c. we cannot but conclude, that this holy Ghoſt muſt be ſomething diſtinct from any Power or Virtue inherent in the Father, becauſe (*d*) that the Perſon of the Father ſhould *be ſent by* the Son; that the Father *ſhould ſpeak not of himſelf*; that he ſhould *receive Power from the Son*, and *glorify the Son for or with that Power* (all which does manifeſtly imply a Subordination to the Son) is not conſiſtent with his being *Sovereignty* independent, the ſole *Origin* of all Power and Authority, and the *Author* and Principle of whatever is done, either by the Son, or by the holy Ghoſt.

The holy Ghoſt's being ſent by the Son implies no Inferiority.

But, though in the *Oeconomy* of the bleſſed Trinity, the Father, as the *Head* and Fountain of the *Deity*, is the *firſt*; the Son, as deriving his *Eſſence* immediately from him, is the *ſecond*, and the holy Ghoſt, as *proceeding* from both Father and Son, is the *third* Perſon; yet, as God is a *ſimple* Being, and the Communication of his Nature muſt be *integrate*, there can be no Inequality in the *three*, nor any *eſſential* Excellence in one, that is not in the other. (*e*) Every divine Perſon muſt be alike: nor can the *two ſubordinate* Perſons, by any Thing, that they ſubmit to, render themſelves leſs divine, than from all Eternity, they have been, and, to all Eternity, muſt continue. The *Office*, each Perſon undertakes, in the Work of Man's Redemption, neither increaſes nor diminiſhes any Excellence, he had before: and therefore as the Son's declaring, *that (f) he had not ſpoken of himſelf, but*

(*x*) John xiv. 16, 17. (*y*) *Smalridge*'s Ser. (*z*) Eph. iv. 30. (*a*) Iſa. xi. 2. (*b*) *Stephens*'s Ser. on the Perſ. and Div. of the holy Ghoſt. (*c*) 1 Cor. xiii. 4, &c. (*d*) *Stephens* ibid. (*e*) *Wheatly* on the Creeds. (*f*) John xii. 49.

that the Father, who ſent him, gave him a Commandment, what he ſhould ſay, and what he ſhould ſpeak, can imply no *Inferiority* to the Father in Point of his Divinity; ſo the holy Ghoſt's being *ſent by the Son*, and *receiving of his, to ſhew it to others*, &c. may indeed denote a *Subordination* in the divine *Oeconomy*, but never can extend to an *Inequality* in the *Eſſence* any more than one Man can be ſaid to be *leſs* an human *Creature*, than another, becauſe he is *ſubordinate*, and miniſters to that *other*, in ſuch Offices, as are appointed him.

But intimates why he proceeds from both Father and Son.

HEREBY however we may perceive the Reaſon, why we make it an *Article of our Faith*, that the holy Ghoſt *proceedeth both from the Father and the Son:* For, (*g*) ſince he is called *the Spirit of the Son*, as well as (*h*) *of the Father*, which ſignifies the ſame Relation to both; ſince he is ſaid to (*i*) *be ſent by the Father*, which Right of *Miſſion* could only ariſe from the *original* Communication of his divine Eſſence, the ſame *Eſſence* he muſt receive likewiſe from the Son, becauſe from (*k*) *the Son* he is equally *ſaid to be ſent:* And ſince, in obtaining the divine Nature, the Son is *prior* to the holy Ghoſt, (in Point of Order, though not of Time,) it muſt be in *common* to both Father and Son, that the *holy Ghoſt* receives it, nor can he derive it *ſeparately* from the Father, without having it likewiſe from the Son; from hence it muſt follow, that, (* without intermedling in the *Controverſy* between the *eaſtern* and *weſtern* Churches in this Point) it is not without Reaſon, that we profeſs, that his *Proceſſion* is equally from *both*, which ſeems to be the Tendency of our Saviour's own arguing, when he ſaith, (*l*) *all Things, that the Father hath, are mine, therefore ſaid I, that he ſhall take of mine, and ſhew it unto you.*

THE *Gifts* and Powers of the *holy Ghoſt* were not indeed ſo fully underſtood among Chriſtians, till after the famous Day of *Pentecoſt*; and, as (*m*) *the holy Ghoſt was not to be given, until Jeſus was glorified*; ſo was it ſome Space of Time, before the *News* of that great *Event* could reach the remoter Parts, where Chriſtianity began to get footing. When St. *Paul* came to *Epheſus* (*n*) *he found certain Diſciples there*, Converts to the Chriſtian Faith, but who had not, as yet, been admitted into the Body of Chriſt's Church by any regular *Baptiſm*; they had been baptized indeed *into John's Baptiſm:* But in that there was no *explicit* mention made of the *holy Ghoſt*; and therefore, (*o*) having departed from *Jeruſalem* before the Time of its miraculous Effuſion, the Fame of it had not yet come to their Knowledge. They knew, it is likely, that there was ſuch a Perſon as the holy Ghoſt, who formerly ſpake by *the Mouth of the Prophets*, but, for full four hundred Years, his Gifts had been withdrawn from the *Jewiſh* Church, and this was the firſt News that they had of their *Reſtoration*. When therefore they tell St. *Paul*, that they had *not ſo much as heard whether there was an holy Ghoſt*, their meaning muſt be, that *they had not yet heard, whether there had been any* giving *of the holy Ghoſt*, any ſuch Gift and Diſtribution of it, as the Apoſtle enquired after. For however they might be ignorant, in their preſent Circumſtances, of the wonderful Effuſion that had happened at *Jeruſalem*, yet *whether there be an holy Ghoſt*, this is what they could not poſſibly make any Queſtion of. The very *Gentiles* themſelves

The Diſciples at Epheſus *their* Ignorance *of the holy Ghoſt, what.*

* In the firſt Diſputes, concerning the Divinity of the holy Ghoſt, with the *Macedonians*, who denied it, there was no other Conteſt, but whether he was truly God, or not. When that was ſettled by the Council of *Conſtantinople*, it was made a Part of the Creed, but it was only ſaid that he *proceeded from the Father*, and, not long after that, the Council of *Epheſus* fixed on that Creed and decreed, that no *Additions* ſhould be made to it. About the End of the *ſixth* Century, notwithſtanding the *weſtern* Church made an Addition to the Article, by which the *holy Ghoſt* was affirmed to proceed from the *Son*, as well as *from the Father*; this Difference however broke no *Communion* between the two Churches, till, about the *ninth* Century, falling into an Humour of quarrelling upon the Account of *Juriſdiction*, they found out this Bone of Contention at laſt. Hereupon the *Greeks* reproached the *Latins* for thus adding to the Faith, and corrupting the *ancient Symbol*, contrary to the Decree of a *general Council*; and the *Latins*, on the other Hand, charged them with detracting from the *Dignity* of the Son, and ſo the Controverſy between them continues to this Day; for the *later Greeks* are very tenacious of their Opinion, though frequent Paſſages out of their own Fathers, ſuch as *Epiphanius*, *Greg. Nyſſen*, *Cyril*, St. *Baſil*, and ſeveral others, are produced by the *Controvertiſts* on the Side of the *Latins*. *Burnet* and *Nichols* on the Articles.

(*g*) Gal. iv. 6. (*h*) Matt. x. 20. (*i*) John xiv. 26. (*k*) Chap. xvi. 7. (*l*) John xvi. 15.
(*m*) John vii. 39. (*n*) Acts xix. 1, &c. (*o*) *Whitby* in Locum.

ſelves were not without ſome Notions of a *divine Afflatus*. The *Jews*, in the Writings of their Prophets, had perpetual Mention of the *Spirit of God*, and therefore theſe *Diſciples*, who, of all other *Jews*, and *Proſelytes*, were the beſt inſtructed, as *being baptized with John's Baptiſm*, could not poſſibly be ignorant of it, though they might not have heard of its *extraordinary Effuſion*, ſince their Lord's Aſcenſion. When therefore the Apoſtle had ſatisfied them in this, and told them withal, that the proper Means of obtaining a Participation in it, was to to be regularly baptized *in the Name of Jeſus*, they readily complied with his Advice, and, (*p*) *when Paul had laid his Hands upon them, the holy Ghoſt came upon them, and they ſpake with Tongues, and propheſied.*

That in the Scriptures he is ſtiled God.

THIS is a plain Account of the whole Matter. And though we ſhould allow, that the holy Ghoſt is not expreſly called by the Name of *God* in Scripture, as the Father and Son very frequently are, yet if every ſingle *Act* or Attribute, peculiar to the ſupreme Being, is, one where or other, aſcribed to him, and even the incommunicable Name itſelf, though not in direct Terms, yet, in Conſequence, and neceſſary Deduction is therein given to him (as a few Inſtances will evince) what farther Proof need we of his Divinity? When *Moſes* informs us that (*q*) *the Lord alone led Iſrael out of Egypt*; the Prophet *Iſaiah* applies this to (*r*) *the Spirit of the Lord*, when *David* ſays of the *Iſraelites*, *that* (*s*) *they in the Wilderneſs provoked the moſt high God*; this the Apoſtle to the *Hebrews* aſcribes to (*t*) *the holy Ghoſt*, when *Jeremiah* tells us, that the *Lord Jehovah will* (*u*) *make a Covenant with the Houſe of Iſrael*; the Author of the *Hebrews* again acquaints us, that this (*x*) *was ſpoken by the holy Ghoſt*; when St. *Peter* ſays, that (*y*) *Prophecy of old* was by the Impulſe *of the holy Ghoſt*, St. *Paul* aſſures us, *that* (*z*) *all Scripture is given by the Inſpiration of God.* Thus, when one and the ſame Perſon, who, in one Place of Scripture, is called the *holy Ghoſt* or *Spirit*, in another Place (which ſtill relates to the ſame Action,) is expreſly named *God* or *Lord*; when (*a*) *Blaſphemy* againſt him is pronounced a Sin *unpardonable*, and his (*b*) *dwelling* in us is ſaid to make us *Temples* of the *living God.* In ſhort, when (*c*) *reſiſting* him is reſiſting God, and (*d*) *lying to him* is the ſame Thing *as lying to God*; what can the Inference be, but that by neceſſary *Implication* at leaſt, if not by direct and particular *Deſignation*, the Holy Ghoſt, in the ſacred Writings, is ſtiled *God?*

Particularly, in St. Peter's *Words to* Ananias.

NAY, in that Paſſage of the Apoſtles Acts, where St. *Peter* reprimands *Ananias*, there is certainly ſomething more than a bare *Implication.* The Deſign of the Apoſtle's Increpation is manifeſtly this——to give *Ananias* the deepeſt Senſe of the *Heinouſneſs* of his Sin, by ſetting before him the Greatneſs of the Perſon, againſt whom he had offended: But now, if by the Holy Ghoſt he had meant any other Thing, than God, why ſhould the high Terms of *Aggravation* be all *diſcharged* againſt *lying to the Holy Ghoſt*, when *lying to God* was certainly a Sign of a much deeper Die; and yet when he ſpeaks of *that*, there is not the leaſt *Note* of any *additional* Guilt, but only a bare Mention of the Crime. (*e*) *Ananias, why has Satan filled thy Heart to lie unto the Holy Ghoſt? Thou haſt not lied unto Men, but unto God.* Now if by *God*, in this Place, the Apoſtle intended the *Holy Ghoſt*, then have we the full and entire Detail of *Ananias*'s Crime; but if by God he meant a Being, *different* from, and *ſuperior* to the Holy Ghoſt, there is plainly a Defect in his *Gradation*; for then he ſhould have ſaid, *thou haſt not lyed to Men only, nor to the Holy Ghoſt only, but unto God*; otherwiſe he had left out one main *Branch* of the *Charge*, upon which he laid the greateſt Streſs in the Beginning of his Expoſtulation with him. Here then we find the bleſſed *Apoſtle*, in expreſs Words, calling the Holy Ghoſt *God*; for, if *lying to him* be *lying to God*, what elſe does he call him, *but God?* Or what other Conſtruction will his Words fairly bear, than this——*thou haſt not lied unto Men, but thou haſt lied to the Holy Ghoſt, who is God?* And ſo we paſs on to the like *Vindication* of the *Gifts* and *Offices*, that are generally aſcribed to him.

The Poſſibility *and* Reality *of the Holy Ghoſt's Operations in us.*

THAT it is poſſible for the Spirit of God, who is the *Author* and *Giver*, as well

(*p*) Acts xix. 6. (*q*) Deut. xxxii. 12. (*r*) Iſ. lxiii. 10. (*s*) Pſalm lxxviii. 17.
(*t*) Heb. iii. 7, &c. (*u*) Jer. xxxi. 31. (*x*) Heb. x. 15, 16. (*y*) 2 Pet. i. 21.
(*z*) 2 Tim. iii. 16. (*a*) Matt. xii. 31, 32. (*b*) 1 Cor. iii. 16, and 2 Cor. vi. 16. (*c*) Acts vii. 51.
(*d*) Acts v. 3, 4. (*e*) Ver. 3, 4.

well as *Superintender* of all our *Faculties*, to communicate himſelf to our Thoughts, and to fit and prepare our Minds for ſuch Communications; that it is reaſonable to imagine, that the *Maker of the Spirits of all Fleſh* ſhould, out of his abundant Goodneſs, aſſiſt, and direct his Creatures, in the Uſe and Exerciſe of the Powers wherewith he has inveſted them; and that he *actually* does thus interpoſe, to aſſiſt and direct our Thoughts, and to form in our Minds good Deſires, and holy Purpoſes, no Man, who attends to what paſſes in his own Breaſt, can pretend to deny. For (*f*) when, upon his reading the Scriptures, or any other religious Books, he finds the *Cloud of his Ignorance* diſperſe, and the Doubts, under which he has for ſome Time labour'd, on a ſudden clear up; when ſuch *pious Thoughts*, as uſed to paſs *tranſiently*, make ſome Abode in his Mind, and ſo leave behind them laſting *Impreſſions*; when he finds a ſudden *Impulſe* upon his Spirits, rouſing him up to the Performance of ſome *great Duty*, which he had before neglected, or an unexpected *Check*, ſtopping him ſhort, when he was blindly ruſhing on to the Commiſſion of ſome *notorious Crime*; when, in his *Devotions*, he finds his Attention fixed, his Affections inflamed, Tears guſhing out at his Eyes, and his Heart, as it were, melted within him; when, under the Preſſure of any grievous *Affliction*, he feels an unexpected Joy and Comfort ſpringing up in his Breaſt; when in the Midſt of *Darkneſs* a Light begins *to dawn*, with *Healing on its Wings*, to chear his drooping Spirits, and to put to flight all melancholy Doubts and Reflections: Upon theſe, and ſundry other Occaſions, I ſay, he is ſenſible of the Preſence and Aid of God's bleſſed Spirit, and feels within himſelf that his *Grace alone* is *ſufficient* for him.

Though we are ignorant of its Manner.

How, or in what Manner, the Spirit of God operates upon the Minds of Men, is a Secret, that our Saviour argues us as ignorant of, as we are of (*g*) the *Iſſues* and Retreats of the Wind. The riſing and ceaſing of Winds is owing to ſome *hidden* Cauſe, that we are not acquainted with, and yet no Man was ever ſo *ſceptical*, as to doubt, whether the Wind blows or no, when he both hears it, and feels it, and ſees the ſundry Effects of it; and, in like Manner, though it be very difficult to conceive, how the Grace of God actuates the *inward Man*, yet it is no Argument either againſt the *Poſſibility* or *Reality* of the Thing, provided we are certain that he does ſo. "We pretend not then to de-" clare (as (*h*) one elegantly expreſſes it) but " thankfully to admire, by what *Ray* the " divine Grace opens, and ſhines in upon " our Underſtandings; by what *Motion* it " inſpires good Thought, and ſuggeſts " holy Purpoſes; by what *welcome Vio-* " *lence* it draws our *Wills*, ſteers our *Ap-* " *petites*, and checks our *Paſſions*;" by what *Heat* it kindles Love, Reſolution, and Chearfulneſs of Endeavours; by what *Diſcipline* it extinguiſhes ſinful Imaginations, vain Hopes, and looſe Deſires; by what *Cordials* it ſtrengthens and exhilarates amidſt all Difficulties; by what *Power* it (*i*) *quickens thoſe that were once dead in Treſpaſſes and Sins.* And, finally, by what patient Art, it *new moulds* our ſtubborn Nature, and (*k*) *works in us what is acceptable in the Sight of God*, (*l*) *even to will, and to do of his good Pleaſure.*

The Neceſſity of them from Reaſon.

THESE are the wonderful, and indeed *ineffable* Operations of divine Grace, and the Man muſt be a perfect Stranger to himſelf, who is vain enough to imagine, that he ſtands in no *Need* of it. For (*m*) when he takes a Survey of his own *Faculties*, and obſerves how *darkſighted* he is in the Perception of divine Truths; with what Reluctance he ſometimes *chooſes*, what his Underſtanding repreſents as good, and refuſes, what his Conſcience pronounces to be evil; how apt his *Affections* are to rebel againſt the Dictates of Reaſon, and his *Paſſions* to hurry him into the Commiſſion of what is forbidden: When he conſiders the great *Variety* of Duties commanded, and of Sins prohibited, and the *Perverſeneſs* of that Nature, which gives him a *Diſreliſh* to the one, and a ſtrong *Propenſity* to the other: When he conſiders the Power, and Cunning, and Vigilance of his *ſpiritual* Enemies, always alluring him to Vice, and ſeducing him from the Practice of Virtue; how ſtrong and deluſive the *Injections* of *Satan* are, and how *delirative* the Pride and the Luſts of the Fleſh, *which war*

(*f*) *Smalridge*'s Ser. (*g*) John iii. 8. (*h*) *Young*'s Ser. (*i*) Eph. ii. 5.
(*k*) Heb. xiii. 21. (*l*) Phil. ii. 13. (*m*) *Smalridge*'s Ser.

war againſt the Soul: When he conſiders with himſelf the Neceſſity of practiſing every Duty, and forſaking every Kind of Wickedneſs, if he would *lay hold* on the Promiſes of the Goſpel; and yet how difficult a Thing it is, to attain ſuch an *Integrity* of Goodneſs, and to refine our Souls to ſuch a Pitch, as to love God above all thoſe *Idols*, after which we *naturally* go aſtray from the Womb: When he conſiders, I ſay, all theſe Difficulties, the great *Taſk* before him, the great *Indiſpoſition* within him, the Avocations, Seductions, Snares and Violences, that are always ready to divert him from his Work, he muſt confeſs, that, without a divine Principle, adding Force and Energy to his weak Endeavours, *he could do nothing*.

Some *Philoſophers* indeed flattered the Pride and Vanity of Men, by teaching them, that they wanted no *ſupernatural* Aſſiſtance to make themſelves *virtuous*, and that therefore it was *idle* and impertinent to petition that of the Gods, which they had Power to confer upon themſelves: But all this was mere *ſwelling* Words, and empty *Rant*. Nature, in its *lapſed* and ruinous Condition, has no Power of *Self-ſufficiency*, (n) the moſt "prudent *Adver-*
"*tency*, the moſt manly *Reſolution*, the
"moſt rational *Love*, and the moſt gene-
"rous *Indignation*, that ever *opinionative*
"*Moraliſt* could conceive, or fortify his
"Breaſt withal, will never be able to ſe-
"cure a Man againſt the *ſubtle* Approach-
"es, or *violent* Aſſaults of Sin. It is
"only the divine Aſſiſtance that is our
"*Caſtle* and Defence in this Regard, and
"whoever terminates his *Hopes*, even of
"ſerving and pleaſing God, upon the
"Confidence of any other Strength, his
"Hopes are *impious*, and he muſt miſ-
"carry."

And Scripture.

Were not this the Caſe, we cannot perceive the Reaſon, why, in all Ages of the World, it has been the appointed Province of God's holy Spirit (as we find it has been) to attend the Exigences of Mankind in this Reſpect. In the Writings of *Moſes*, this is one of the chief *Promiſes* made to the Children of *Iſrael*, (o) *the Lord thy God will circumciſe thine Heart, and the Heart of thy Seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine Heart, and with all thy Soul*. In the Writings of the *Prophets* we read frequently of the (p) *new Heart*, which God will *give us*, and the *new Spirit, which he will put in us, to cauſe us to walk in his Statutes, and to keep his Judgments to do them*. And in the Writings of the *Pſalmiſt* more eſpecially, all the Offices of God's bleſſed Spirit conducing to our *Sanctification* (ſuch as *cleanſing, guiding, helping, renewing, ſtrengthening, and eſtabliſhing*) are mentioned as expreſsly as in the *Goſpel*. What Language the *Goſpel* ſpeaks, it is needleſs to recite, when in every Page we find, that our *Underſtandings* are enlightened, our *Wills* conducted, our *Affections* regulated, and all imputed to the Miniſtry of the ſame Spirit; that of ourſelves we can do nothing, but are *led by the Spirit, are kept by Grace unto Salvation*, and are (q) *waſhed, and ſanctified, and juſtified, in the Name of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and by the Spirit of our God*; for (r) *every good and every perfect Gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of Lights, with whom is no Variableneſs neither Shadow of turning*.

And that they are not ceaſed now.

How perfect and effectual this Gift of the holy Spirit was, in the *early* Ages of Chriſtianity, when, on a ſudden, it tranſformed the *Converts* to this moſt holy Religion into *new Creatures*, and, from the very Sink of Impiety and Impurity, reclaimed them to the Practice of Sobriety and all Manner of Godlineſs, we have Examples almoſt innumerable upon Record; nor do we want modern Inſtances of its continued Influence, and Permanency with good Chriſtians; for ſuch I take to be, that inward and mighty Support, which has ſuſtained the Spirits of ſome Men, with incredible Patience and Reſignation, nay with ſome Degrees of Alacrity, and Chearfulneſs too, under the greateſt bodily Infirmities, and the moſt *painful*, as well as the moſt *lingering* Diſeaſes; and though the Operations of the Holy Ghoſt are *internal*, and therefore *inviſible*, yet I make no Doubt, but that, even in ordinary Caſes, it has a conſtant Effect upon the Souls of Men, and is either ſecretly whiſpering to their Underſtandings, or gently inclining their reluctant Wills, either moderating their Affections, or curbing their

(n) *Young's* Ser. Vol. II. (o) Deut. xxx. 6. (p) Ezek. xxxvi. 26, 27. (q) 1 Cor. vi. 11. (r) James i. 17.

licentious Paſſions, either raiſing their dejected Spirits or confirming their religious Purpoſes, ever accompanying them, and moving ſilently along with them, and kindly exciting their Endeavours, that they (s) *may be neither barren, nor unfruitful in the Knowledge of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.*

The Manner of the Spirit's working upon us.

THEY who will not allow that God, by the inward Efficacy of his Spirit, does *ſanctify* the Heart and Affections of Men, do nevertheleſs allow, that, by the Diſpenſation of his Providence, he frequently beſtows upon them *temporal* good Things. Now, when God is minded to bleſs a Man with *Riches*, he does not immediately open *Windows* in Heaven, and pour them into his Treaſure; he (t) does not inrich him with ſuch a diſtinguiſhing Providence, as that, wherewith he watered *Gideon*'s Fleece, when the Earth about it was dry; but he endues ſuch a Man with Diligence and Frugality, or elſe adorns him with ſuch *acceptable* Qualifications, as recommend him to the *Opportunities* of Advancement; and thus his Riſe to Fortunes is made purely *natural*, and the diſtinct Working of God does not appear in it: And, in like Manner, when, by the inward Operations of Grace, God brings a Man to a State of true Religion, he does not thereupon ſuddenly change the whole Frame of his Nature, chain up the Movements of his Paſſions and Affections, and infuſe into him ſuch a *Syſtem* of virtuous Habits, as will make him good, without any Pains and Application of his own; but he works this ſpiritual Work by a *gradual* Proceſs, inſtilling into ſuch a Man firſt a *conſidering* Mind, next a ſober Reſolution, and then a diligent Uſe of ſuch moral Means, as conduce to the Formation and Perfection of every Virtue in him: And thus his Progreſs in Holineſs ſeems to be natural, even while the Aſſiſtance of God's Spirit is the principal Mover.

And how it conſiſts with the Freedom of our Will.

BUT how much ſoever we attribute to the Aſſiſtance of God's Spirit, our own Endeavours and Concurrence therewith muſt not be excluded: The Power and Efficacy of Grace, even where it has the moſt effectual Influence, muſt, upon no Account, be underſtood to be ſuch, as to over-rule the *Liberty* of Mens Will and Choice, and render their Actions *neceſſary*, becauſe this would be to remove the whole *Foundation* of Religion, by deſtroying the *Morality* of Mens Actions, and taking away the very Nature of Virtue and Vice. (u) Since therefore, neither the *Influence* of divine Grace, nor the proper *Power* of Men, in the Uſe of their natural Faculties, can, without an evident Contradiction, be denied, it follows unavoidably, that the Grace of God muſt of Neceſſity always be underſtood to have the Nature of *a moral Aſſiſtance only*, which does perfectly agree with Mens free Uſe of their Faculties, and that is not in the Nature of a *phyſical* Compulſion, which is altogether inconſiſtent with Mens doing any Thing *themſelves*: And therefore we find the Apoſtle thus expreſſing the whole Notion of the Grace of God, in Conjunction with the Will of Man, (x) *work out your own Salvation with Fear and Trembling, for it is God, that worketh in you both to will, and to do of his good Pleaſure*; where he does not ſay, *work out your own Salvation* yourſelves, as *having* no Need of *the Grace of God*, neither does he ſay, on the Contrary, *the Grace of God worketh* all *in you, and therefore you need not to do any Thing* yourſelves; but, aſcribing to each Part its proper Office, he ſays, *work* ye *out your* own Salvation; becauſe the Grace of God *gives you Power ſo to do.*

The DISSERTATION.

Of the Sin againſt the Holy Ghoſt.

The different Opinions *about it.*

VARIOUS have been the Opinions of learned Men concerning the *Sin againſt the Holy Ghoſt.* (y) Some have imagined, that any *wilful* and *deliberate* Crime, committed contrary to the Dictates and Upbraidings of our Conſcience, is the Sin againſt the Holy Ghoſt, and therefore *unpardonable*, becauſe acted againſt clear Conviction. Others have ſuppoſed, that *profane* and *blaſphemous Thoughts*, or entertaining

(s) 2 Pet. i. 8. (t) *Young*'s Ser. Vol. II. (u) *Clarke*'s Ser. Vol. II. (x) Phil. ii. 12, 13.
(y) *Stephens*'s Ser. Vol. II.

entertaining unworthy Notions, either of the *Being* of God (ſo as to queſtion his *Exiſtence*) or of the *Perfections* of his Nature (ſo as to deny any of his *Attributes*) is this mortal Sin, and the greateſt Man is capable of, as having God for its immediate *Object*; whilſt others have thought that reſiſting the Motions of the bleſſed Spirit in our Breaſts, and ſtifling and ſuppreſſing its Influences (which in other Places is called *quenching* and *grieving* it) is the Sin we are now enquiring after. Some, with St. *Auſtin*, maintaining that all Sins are pardonable upon Repentance, have reſolved this into final *Obduration* and *Impenitence*; others, with *Origen*, and the *Novatians* of old, have imagined, that every heinous Sin, incurred after *Baptiſm*; others, that all malicious Oppoſition to the Truth of Religion; and others, that a total Apoſtacy from the Profeſſion of it, is the Crime of this pernicious Nature. But theſe Suppoſitions are ill founded. Every Sin, that we commit, is, in ſome Senſe indeed, a Sin againſt the holy Ghoſt, as he is by Nature God, againſt whom every Sin is a *Tranſgreſſion*; but the Sin, we are now going to conſider, is of a peculiar Nature, and different from all theſe.

That it conſiſts in Evil ſpeaking.

Our bleſſed Saviour calls it *Blaſphemy*; and Blaſphemy is nothing elſe, but ſpeaking reproachfully of another. We indeed, in our Language, ſeem to appropriate it to ſuch Words and evil Speeches, as are levelled againſt God; but the Scripture makes no Difference in this Reſpect. It takes the Word in its general Signification, as importing Slander, Calumny, and Evil-ſpeaking of any Kind; and when it is applied to the holy Ghoſt, all its Aggravation ariſes from the *Dignity* of the Perſon, againſt whom it is levelled. And indeed, if we conſider the Matter rightly, Slander, or Evil-ſpeaking is the only Way, whereby we can injure and affront, in a publick Manner, the holy Spirit of God. Man, weak, impotent, and helpleſs Man, cannot injure the *Almighty* by any other Means, than by ſhewing a Contempt of his Honour, and Diſreſpect to his Perſon. Our Actions, however ill deſigned againſt him, cannot reach him: his divine Nature is ſecure from all our Attacks, and nothing, that belongs to him, except his Honour, lies open to our Inſults. As therefore the holy Ghoſt is truly and eſſentially God, we cannot injure him any other Way, than by leſſening him in our Thoughts, and ſlandering him in our Words. Our Actions indeed may run counter to his Gifts: we may croſs and thwart the Motions of his Grace: we may reproach his Mercy, by refuſing his Influences, and thus undervalue his gracious Adminiſtrations; but, as this does not reach his divine Nature, and as we have no other Way of doing Deſpight unto him, but by impairing his Honour in our Conceptions, or our Words, ſo Slander and Evil-ſpeaking (as they are outward Acts) ſeem to be the neceſſary Significations of the Sin againſt the holy Ghoſt: but then the Queſtion is, to what particular Kind or Species of Evil-ſpeaking the Blaſphemy, now under Conſideration, is to be confined.

In the 12th Chapter of St. *Matthew*'s Goſpel, our Saviour, having healed a blind and dumb Man, by caſting out the Devil, that had poſſeſſed him, and ſo reſtored him to his Sight and Speech again, the People, aſtoniſhed at the *Greatneſs* of the Miracle, could not but conclude, that he muſt certainly be the *Meſſias*: whereupon the *Phariſees*, fearful of what the Event might be, and hardened by their Malice againſt Conviction, endeavoured to give the Miracle another Turn, by ſuggeſting to the People, that it might probably come from no commendable Cauſe. (z) *This Fellow* (ſay they ſpeaking in Terms of the higheſt Contempt) *does not caſt out Devils, but by Beelzebub, the Prince of the Devils*; as if he had been a Cheat, an Impoſtor, a Magician, one that was aſſiſted, in theſe uncommon Performances, by the Power and Confederacy of the Devil: To which our Saviour replies,——that the Devils were certainly better *Politicians*, than to differ, and diſagree among themſelves, in a Matter relating to their common Intereſt, which would be the ready Way to deſtroy their Kingdom; (a) *If Satan caſt out Satan, how then ſhall his Kingdom ſtand?* * That the ſame Practice was

That the Phariſees *were the Perſons guilty.*

(z) Matt. xii. 24. (a) Ver. 26.

* That it was the Cuſtom of the *Jews* to caſt out Devils by the *Invocation* of the Name of the *moſt High*, or of the God of *Abraham*, *Iſaac*, and *Jacob*, we learn from *Juſtin Martyr*, in his *Dialogue with Trypho* the *Jew*, telling him, *if any of you do exorcize Devils by the Name of the God of Abraham, Iſaac, and*

was frequently uſed among themſelves, yet they never imputed it to the Aſſiſtance of any diabolical Power; (*b*) *If I, by Beelzebub caſt out Devils, by whom do your Children* (your Friends the *Exorciſts*) *caſt them out?* And that, as for his own Part, he was ſo far from having any Commerce or good Underſtanding with the Devil, that his whole Life and Actions, as well as the Tendency of his Doctrine, were in direct Oppoſition to him, *viz.* (*c*) to *bind the ſtrong* Prince in Chains, *riſle his Houſe, and ſpoil all his Goods.* And having thus confuted and expoſed the unreaſonable Malice of the Phariſees, in aſcribing the Miracles, done by a *divine Power*, to the Aſſiſtance of the *Prince of the Devils*, he cloſes his Reply with this tremendous Commination. (*d*) *Wherefore, I ſay unto you, all Manner of Sin and Blaſphemy ſhall be forgiven unto Men; but the Blaſphemy againſt the holy Ghoſt ſhall not be forgiven unto Men. And whoſoever ſpeaketh a Word againſt the Son of Man, it ſhall be forgiven him: But whoſoever ſpeaketh againſt the holy Ghoſt, it ſhall not be forgiven him, neither in this World, nor in the World to come.* The *Words*, we may obſerve, run all together in the *future Tenſe*, and ſeem to reſpect not what had been already done, but only what hereafter ſhould be done; which has induced ſome to imagine, that the *Phariſees*, then preſent, were not the Perſons concerned in this unpardonable Sin, becauſe our Saviour afterwards urged them to Repentance, and continued his preaching to them, in order to their Conviction. He prayed for them, at the Time of his *Crucifixion*, and, after his *Reſurrection*, ordered his Apoſtles, by their Sermons and Miracles, to endeavour to convert them, which he would not have done had they been *reprobated* from the Mercy of God, and *predeſtinated* to eternal Damnation; and therefore they conclude, as *the holy Ghoſt was not yet given*, nor, (properly ſpeaking) could be *blaſphemed* before the Time of his being ſent, this Sin againſt him was not to commence, till after his Deſcent upon the Apoſtles, at the Day of *Pentecoſt*. But ſtrange it is, that our Saviour ſhould ſo ſeverely inveigh againſt a Sin at a Time, when no Body was capable of committing it, and that both in the *Acts* and *Epiſtles* of the Apoſtles, there ſhould not a Word be ſaid concerning it, either by Way of *Caution*, or Reproof, when that was the only Time, where it could be incurred; eſpecially conſidering that St. *Mark*, who gives us the like Narrative of our Lord's Diſcourſe upon this Subject, after having recited the dreadful Sentence againſt ſuch, as ſhould (*e*) *blaſpheme againſt the holy Ghoſt*, applies it directly to the *Phariſees* then preſent, in this ſhort Note upon them, *becauſe they ſaid, he hath an unclean Spirit*; plainly declaring, that reviling the holy Ghoſt, as *an unclean Spirit*, was the Blaſphemy our Lord intended, and what the *Phariſees* had juſt before committed.

UPON the whole then it appears, that the *Phariſees* were the Perſons chargeable with this Sin, or Blaſphemy againſt the holy Ghoſt; and the particular Kind of their Blaſphemy was this—that, when our Saviour, to ſhew that he was ſent by God, and came from him, wrought ſuch Miracles, as did plainly evidence a divine Power and Preſence accompanying him, and of theſe Miracles the *Phariſees* were *Eye-witneſſes*, ſo that they could not deny the *Reality* of them; yet ſuch was their Oppoſition to him, and his Doctrine, that rather than own him to be the *Meſſias*, and his Doctrine to come from God, they moſt maliciouſly and unreaſonably aſcribed them to a diabolical Combination. They were, in their Conſciences, aſſured, that he wrought them by the Power of the bleſſed Spirit, and yet, before the People, inſinuated his acting jointly with the Devil: their *private* Sentiments gave the *Lie* to their *publick* Suggeſtions; and they wilfully and obſtinately aſcribed to the Devil, what, at the ſame Time, they knew was effected by the *Finger of God*.

And what particular Kind of Evil-ſpeaking their was.

THIS

and Jacob, perhaps he will obey you; and from *Irenæus*, who avers, that *all Things are ſubject to the moſt High, and, by Invocation of his Name, even before the Advent of our Lord, Men were ſaved from evil Spirits, and all Kinds of Demons*, L. 2. C. 5. And therefore the Tenour of our Saviour's Argument ſeems "to run thus——" You doubt not, but your *Exorciſts*, who uſe the Name of God, the God of *Abra-* "*ham*, &c. do caſt out Devils by that Name; it will then be Matter of your Condemnation, who "paſs ſo *favourable* a Judgment upon them, to paſs ſuch an unjuſt *Cenſure* upon me, in whom you "ſee far greater Evidences of the *Finger of God*, in caſting out all Manner of evil Spirits, and healing all "Kinds of Diſeaſes, *Whitby* in Locum.

(*b*) Matt. xii. 27. (*c*) Ver. 29. (*d*) Ver. 31, 32. (*e*) Mark iii. 29, 30.

The Heinouſneſs *of it.*

THIS was the Formality of the Sin committed by the *Phariſees*: and herein appears the Heinouſneſs of their Guilt, that they were ſo reſolute, and ſo outragious in reviling every Thing, that gave any Countenance to Chriſt and his Goſpel, that they would not ſpare even God himſelf, but called him *Beelzebub*; ſpitefully defaming his moſt *divine Works*, as being nothing elſe, but *diabolical Impoſtures*. (*f*) They ſaw the Miracles of our bleſſed Lord, and were very ſenſible, that they were *real* and true Miracles: They knew likewiſe that they were wrought in direct Oppoſition to the *Devil*, and his Kingdom, and had all the fair Appearances of being divine; nor would they have ſcrupled to have received them as *divine*, had they been wrought by any one elſe, but Chriſt; but ſuch was their invenomed Hatred, and Inveteracy againſt him, that, at all Adventures, contrary to all Candor and Equity, and in Contradiction to Reaſon and common Senſe, they reſolved to ſay however (though they did not believe it) that he was in *League with the Devil*, and that all his mighty Works, which he wrought *in the Name of God*, were the Works only of *Beelzebub, the Prince of the Devils*.

IN other Reſpects, our bleſſed Saviour, during the Courſe of his *Miniſtry*, had not been treated with the beſt of Manners. (*g*) He had been reproached with the *Poverty* of his Family, and the *Meanneſs* of the Country, from whence he came, *a Wine-biber, a Glutton, a Friend of Publicans and Sinners*, and many more Calumnies of the like Nature had maliciouſly been caſt upon him; but all theſe, as not reflecting upon that divine Power, which he manifeſted in his Miracles, he eaſily overlooked. Theſe were but *perſonal* Affronts, and therefore, in Conformity to his own Doctrine, he meekly paſſed them by, for *whoſoever ſpeaketh a Word againſt the Son of Man, it ſhall be forgiven him*: but when the divine Authority, by which he acted, came to be impeached, reviled, and calumniated, this was ſuch an Outrage againſt the Majeſty of Heaven, as required a proper Reſentment and Caſtigation: but (*h*) *whoſoever ſpeaketh againſt the holy Ghoſt, ſhall never be forgiven, but is in Danger of eternal Damnation*: Eſpecially conſidering, that this Calumny was raiſed on Purpoſe to hinder and obſtruct, as much as poſſible, the firſt planting of the Goſpel, to the univerſal Hurt and Detriment of Mankind. In ſhort this one Act of the *Phariſees* was *ſacrificing* the Honour of Almighty God, and both the preſent and future Happineſs of Men, to their own *private* Humours, and *Party-Paſſions*, being reſolved to take up with any wretched *Cavil*, and improbable, ſelf contradictory Lies, and Slanders againſt God, rather than permit the honeſt and well-meaning People to believe in Chriſt, upon the brighteſt Evidence of his Miracles.

Whether abſolutely *unpardonable.*

SUCH is the heinous Nature of this Blaſphemy, and therefore we may leſs wonder that in the Goſpel-Covenant, *founded upon* better and more gracious Promiſes, than any other ever was, there ſhould be any ſuch Thing, as an Offence, which *ſhall not be forgiven, neither in this World nor in the World to come*. The *Severity* of this Sentence however (*i*) ſome Men have endeavoured to *mollify* by underſtanding the Words in a *comparative* Senſe, *viz.* that any other Sin ſhall *ſooner* be forgiven, than this againſt the holy Ghoſt; and therefore they ſuppoſe, that our Saviour only intended to expreſs the Greatneſs and Heinouſneſs of this Sin above all others, and that though, in this Reſpect, the Pardon of it would be more difficult, than any other, yet this would not make the Caſe of the Perſon guilty of it *deſperate*, only oblige him to a more ſevere Repentance. But this is by no Means agreeable to the Scope of our Saviour's Diſcourſe, which is intended to difference this particular Sin from all others, by making a Compariſon between them. Of *others* he pronounces, that they may, and ſhall be forgiven, *i. e.* upon Repentance; but *this* he avers is utterly *irremiſſible*. But now, if Blaſphemy againſt the holy Ghoſt be forgiven upon Repentance, as well as all other Sins, then is there no Difference (as to Remiſſion or Forgiveneſs) between that, and other Sins, and, conſequently, our Saviour muſt have put a *Diſtinction*, where there is no *Difference*, and defeated his own Aſſertion, if Blaſphemy againſt the holy Ghoſt is no more *unpardonable*, than any other Sin whatever, but may be forgiven upon a more ſtrict and ſolemn Repentance than ordinary.

THIS is certainly not the Deſign of our Saviour's Words, and therefore we may conclude, that whatever Conſtruction others

(*f*) *Waterland*'s Ser. Vol. II. (*g*) *Tillotſon*'s Ser. Vol. I. (*h*) Mark iii. 29. (*i*) *Grotius* and *Hammond*.

may please to put upon them, his meaning was to declare, that Blasphemy against the holy Ghost was absolutely unpardonable.

And why. And why was it so? (*k*) because it proceeded (as he intimates) from a certain incurable malicious Disposition of Mind, which, by venting itself, under such peculiar Circumstances, in Blasphemy against the greatest of our Lord's Miracles, plainly discovered itself to be incapable of Amendment. It was not then so much for the *Words spoken*, as for the *Principle*, from whence they came, even an obstinate and incurable wicked Temper of Mind, that our Saviour (who knew their Hearts perfectly) pronounced the Sin of the *Pharisees unpardonable*; and accordingly he adjoins this Exprobation, *O (l) Generation of Vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good Things? for out of the Abundance of the Heart the Mouth speaketh.*

That it scarce can be committed now.

There is no doubt to be made indeed, but that God, if he pleases, can work so *powerfully* upon the Minds of Men by his Grace and Spirit, as to convince the most obstinate; and supposing them to be convinced and repent, it cannot be denied, but that they would be forgiven: and therefore, when our Saviour says, that they shall not be forgiven, it is reasonable to suppose, that he means, that they are arrived at such a Degree of Obstinacy and Malice, that God will (as justly he may) withdraw his Grace from them, and leave them to the *Bias* of their perverse and malicious Minds, which will full engage them in a farther Opposition to the Truth, and, at last, sink them into Perdition. For, being deserted by God, and, for Want of the necessary Aid of his Grace, continuing finally impenitent, they become incapable of Forgiveness, *both in this World, and that which is to come.*

Since *the Sin against the holy Ghost* then is of so high a Nature, and, upon sundry Accounts, so unpardonable, the Question is, whether Christians, in these Days, are capable of committing it, and in what Crimes they make the nearest Approaches to it. Now were all Men indeed sincere Christians, and *inwardly* persuaded of the Truth of what they *outwardly* profess, there would be no Danger of any one's incurring this Sin; but (*m*) since it is a certain, though *melancholy* Truth, that we have numbers of Men among us, who avowedly, and barefacedly deny the Christian Religion, and who make it their Business, both in their Words and Writings, to disparage Christ and his Miracles; as we know not what their *particular* Opinions concerning the Miracles may be, *i. e.* whether they deny the *Truth* of them, or whether, allowing their Truth, they impute them *to Magick*, we cannot rightly determine, whether they are committing this heinous Sin or no. *Infidels* they are without doubt, but then we must observe, that the Infidels of these Times, can scarce come up to the same Degree of Guilt, with the Pharisees of old, because they have not seen the Miracles of Christ with their own Eyes. It is some *Mitigation* of their Sin, and it makes their *Infidelity* the more excusable, that they have not altogether so strong and glaring Evidences of the Truth of Christianity, as those had, who lived in the first Ages, and saw the wonderful Works of God. (*n*) *Rational* and *historical* Evidence may be as convincing as the other, when *duly considered*: but, as it strikes not upon the Senses, it does not awaken the Attention, and alarm every Passion of the Soul in such a Degree, as the other does. For this Reason the Unbelievers of our Times (though abandoned and profligate Men) are not altogether so blameable in the Opposition, they make to Christianity, as the Unbelievers of old Time were. They may indeed, at this Day, attribute the Miracles of *Christ* and his *Apostles* to the Devil, as the *Pharisees* of old did, and this will be *blaspheming the holy Ghost*; but it will not be exactly the *same* Sin, not the same in *Degree* (though in *Kind* the same) because Circumstances are different, and upon the Circumstances depend the heightening Aggravations.

And what Sins do nearest approach it.

But though the Sin against the holy Ghost, in all its aggravating Circumstances, cannot, in our Days, properly be committed; yet all Divines seem to agree, that an *open* and avowed *Opposition* to the Christian Religion, after a sufficient Evidence of its Truth, a *total Apostacy*, and Defection from the Profession of it, and going over to its Enemies, an *Abuse* of the holy Scriptures, which were indicted by the Spirit of God, a wilful *Perversion* of their Sense, in order to turn them into Ridicule, the Commission of Sin against the clear Conviction of our Consciences, and a resolute Perseverance therein, notwithstanding all inward Suggestions, and Remonstrances to the contrary, that these are

(*k*) *Clark*'s Ser. Vol. VI. (*l*) Matt. xii. 34. (*m*) *Stephens*'s Ser. Vol. II. (*n*) *Waterlands* Ser. Vol. II.

are large and bold Advances towards it; and much more may we ſay ſo, not only of *obſtinately rejecting* the Miracles of our Lord and his Diſciples, but of *bantering* and making a Jeſt of them, and (as the Wickedneſs of ſome is) endeavouring to run them down, either as *fictitious* Stories, or *fallacious* Colluſions. *Scoffers* of this Kind come very little ſhort, in their Spleen and Malice, in their Perverſeneſs and Hardneſs of Heart, and in their impious and deſperate Defiance of God, Chriſt, and the holy Spirit of both, of the *Phariſees* of old, the *prime* Committers of this dread Offence, and therefore, *O (o) my Soul, come not thou into their Secret, unto their Aſſembly, mine Honour, be not thou united*; but *(p) depart from the Tents of theſe wicked Men, leſt thou be conſumed in all their Sins.*

So much for the Expoſition of the *eighth* Article, *I believe in the holy Ghoſt*, wherein we profeſs our full Perſuaſion, "That, how "truly ſoever other Beings may be called "*Spirits*, yet there is one particular and "peculiar Spirit, who is a real *Perſon*, and "no *Quality*, or Operation of the ſupreme "God; a *divine* Perſon, in full Poſſeſſion "of the Godhead; a Perſon diſtinct from "both Father and Son, though equally "*proceeding* from both, and, in Conjunc-"tion with both, making but *one God*. "That in the *divine Oeconomy*, the Office, "wherein any Perſon in the bleſſed Trinity "is employed, denotes no *Inferiority* in "him, as to his Divinity; and therefore, "when the holy Ghoſt is ſaid to be *ſent by "the Son*, or to *receive from him*, this can "no Ways affect the Equality of his God-"head, which can admit of no Diminu-"tion, but muſt in every one be alike: "that, as the Son, for the Redemption of "Mankind, was *incarnate*, and ſuffered "Death; ſo, for the Calling, and Sancti-"fication of *God's Elect*, the holy Ghoſt, "in his Turn, deſcended from Heaven on "the Day of *Pentecoſt*, and beſtowed up-"on the Apoſtles and firſt Chriſtians Gifts "miraculous, and ſuch as enabled them to "propagate the Goſpel with Succeſs: that, "though theſe *extraordinary* Gifts are now "withdrawn, he ſtill continues to the "Church of Chriſt, and every faithful "Member of it, the daily Aſſiſtance of his "*Grace*, whereby he enlightens our *Under-"ſtandings*, inclines our *Wills*, and *Affecti-"ons*, comforts our Hearts, excites our "Care, confirms our Reſolutions, directs "and aſſiſts our Prayers, and, in ſhort, "performs every other Office (in an eaſy "and familiar Manner, conſiſtent with the "*Freedom* of our Wills, but incomprehen-"ſible to our Underſtandings) that will con-"duce to *(q) make us meet to be Partakers "of the Inheritance of the Saints in Light*; "and the proper Effect of all this is— "to make him the equal Object of our "Adoration and Praiſe, ſince he commu-"nicates in the ſame divine Nature with "the Father and the Son: To bleſs the Fa-"ther and Son both, for their joint *Miſ-"ſion* of him to the *Apoſtles*, ſince, by his "Aſſiſtance, the *Light of the glorious Go-"ſpel* of Chriſt has ſhone unto us: To en-"courage us in all our religious Undertak-"ings, ſince we have an *almighty Helper* "to ſtand by us, and attend our Exigences: "To recognize, from whence the *Sancti-"ty*, that is *adventitious*, and not inherent "in our Natures, comes: To acknowledge "our manifold *Obligations* to him, who is "the Author of our *ſpiritual Life*, and all "good Diſpoſitions in us: To enquire fre-"quently what *Advances* we have made, by "his ſecret Co-operation with us, in the "great and *myſterious* Work of our *Sancti-"fication*; and to invite and encourage him, "by our Uſe of all the *Means* inſtituted "for that Purpoſe, to carry it on for us to "Perfection; hearkening *attentively* to his "ſoft *Whiſpers* and Suggeſtions; admitting "*gladly* his gentle *Illapſes*, complying with "his kind *Motions*, and preparing for his "Entertainment, and continued Reſidence "with us, *(r) by cleanſing ourſelves from "all Filthineſs both of the Fleſh and Spirit.*"

(o) Gen. xlix. 6. (p) Numb. xvi. 26. (q) Col. i. 12. (r) 2 Cor. vii. 1.

CHAP.

CHAP. IX.

ARTICLE IX.

* The Holy Catholick Church, the Communion of Saints.

The EXPOSITION.

The Meaning of the Word Church *from its first* Institution.

THE Word *Church* has ſo many various Significations in the *New Teſtament*, and, in whatever *Language* we conſider it, from its *Etymology* we can learn ſo very little of its true Nature and Import, that, to form any tolerable Notion of it, our only Way muſt be to have Recourſe to its *original Inſtitution*. Our bleſſed Saviour, having, by his own preaching, and working of Miracles, laid the firſt *Foundation* of a Church, out of the whole Number of his Diſciples he ſelected *twelve*, whom he called his *Apoſtles*, to carry on the Work, which he had begun. Theſe he ordained in a *ſolemn* Manner; and, having inveſted them with a Power (*a*) *to heal Sickneſſes, and to caſt out Devils*, he commiſſioned them to preach the Goſpel, but under this *Limitation*, that they (*b*) *ſhould only go to the loſt Sheep of the Houſe of Iſrael.* They went, and returned with Succeſs: but, we do not hear, that, during the Time of his *Miniſtry*, he ever ſent them out again upon the like Errand. After his *Reſurrection* however, when *all Power was given unto him in Heaven and Earth*, we find him enlarging their Commiſſion in this Manner—(*c*) *Go ye therefore, and teach all Nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy Ghoſt, and lo! I am with you alway, even unto the End of the World.*

THIS, no doubt, was a Work of inconceivable *Difficulty* for Men in their Circumſtances to undertake; and therefore he commands them, not to depart from *Jeruſalem, until they received Power from above:* and, accordingly, after his *Aſcenſion*, they returned to that City, and there (*d*) *continued, with one Accord, in Supplication, and Prayer, and waiting for the Coming of the Promiſe of the Father. The (e) Number* of the Apoſtles and Diſciples all together was, at that Time, about *an hundred and twenty Perſons:* This was the *original* Church of Chriſt, the little *Flock*, which he had gathered. But, (*f*) *when the Day of Pentecoſt was fully come*, and the miraculous Gifts of the holy Ghoſt had ſufficiently qualified the Apoſtles for the Work, which they were to execute, St. *Peter*, on that very Day, and in one ſingle Sermon, converted (*g*) *about three thouſand Souls* to the Chriſtian Faith, who *continued ſtedfaſtly in the Apoſtles Doctrine and Fellowſhip, and in breaking of Bread, and in Prayers.*

THUS was the Church of *Jeruſalem*, which conſiſted of our Lord's *Apoſtles* and *Diſciples*, together with this Acceſſion of new Converts and Believers, all baptized in the Name of *Jeſus*, all agreeing in the ſame *Faith*, all united in the ſame Bond of *Peace*, and all joining in the ſame *Sacraments*, and Form of religious Worſhip, the true *original Mother Church* of Chriſt, who (in the Phraſe of the Prophet) (*h*) *bore upon her Sides, and dandled upon her Knees*, the firſt Heirs of Promiſe, according to the *Covenant*

* In ſome of the *ancient* Creeds, this Article concerning the *Church* is placed the *laſt* of all. In that of St. *Cyprian* we find it ſo; for therein we profeſs to believe *the Remiſſion of Sins, and Life everlaſting through the Holy Church*; and the Reaſon hereof (as we may gather from the ſame *Father*) is, that theſe Privileges could not be obtained *but in, and through the Holy Catholick Church.* In moſt Creeds however this Article has the ſame Place, that it has here, and follows immediately our Faith in *the Holy Ghoſt*, for which *Tertullian* aſſigns this Reaſon——*That, after the pledging our Faith and* Hope *in the Trinity, the Mention of the Church is neceſſarily added, becauſe* where *theſe three, the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghoſt are, there is the Church, which is the Body of them.* De Baptiſmo. *King*'s Crit. Hiſt. of the Creed.

(*a*) Mark iii. 15. (*b*) Matt. x. 6. (*c*) Matt. xxviii. 19, 20. (*d*) Acts i. 4, 14. (*e*) Ver. 15. (*f*) Acts ii. 1. (*g*) Ver. 41, 42. (*h*) Iſa. lxvi. 12.

venant of *Grace*; and whatever Increaſe was afterwards made to this Family of the Faithful (*as (i) the Lord added to the Church daily ſuch as ſhould be ſaved*) ſhe afterwards received into her Boſom, and made Partakers of the ſame *Communion*.

The Definition and Properties of it.

FROM this ſhort Review of the Riſe and Conſtitution of the Chriſtian Church, as it was firſt planted at *Jeruſalem*, and has thence been diſſeminated all the World over, we may not improperly define it to be——" The whole Society of Chriſtian " People, ſeparate from the reſt of Mankind, that are admitted into Covenant " with God by *Baptiſm*, united in one " Body under *Jeſus Chriſt* their ſupreme " *Head*, under proper Governors diſtributed into *particular* Churches, and in the " ſame Faith, Worſhip, and Sacraments " joining *Communion* with one another:" But then when we ſay, that * we *believe this Holy Catholick Church*, our Meaning is not, that we intirely devolve our Faith into its *Authority*, and implicitly receive all its *Laws* and Ordinances, deviſed by fallible Men, as *infallible Truths*, but only, that we acknowledge, in the Senſe of this *Definition*, its *actual Exiſtence*, and openly profeſs, that, as from the Beginning of Chriſtianity, even until now, ſuch a Society has exiſted, and is now in being, however diſperſed through the diſtant and divided Parts of the World, ſo ſhall it continue to be a Body viſible, permanent, and unextinguiſhable, even to the final *Conſummation of all Things*.

1. Unity.

THE *Unity* of the Church, which is mentioned in other Creeds, is ſuppoſed here to be implied in the *ſingular Number*, wherein it is expreſſed; and various are the *Alluſions*, that the Spirit of God makes Uſe of to illuſtrate this *Affection*. St. *Paul* is very eloquent, and very copious upon this Subject. (*k*) *As the Body is one*, ſaith he, *and hath many Members, and all the Members of that one Body, being many, are one Body; ſo alſo is Chriſt, for by one Spirit we are all baptized into one Body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free.* (*l*) *Now the Head of every Man is Chriſt,* (*m*) *from which all the Body, by Joints and Bands having Nouriſhment miniſtred, and knitted together, increaſeth with the Increaſe of God.* Here he borrows his Compariſon from the *natural* Body; and then from *artificial* Bodies he argues in this Manner——(*n*) *ye are built upon the Foundation of the Apoſtles and Prophets, Jeſus Chriſt himſelf being the chief Corner Stone, in whom all the Building, fitly framed together, groweth unto an holy Temple in the Lord*; even as ſometimes he takes his Hints and Alluſions (*o*) *from Cities, from Families*, and other *political* Bodies; from all which his Intention is to demonſtrate that all Societies of Chriſtians, holding the ſame *Foundation*, or having (*p*) *one Lord, one Faith, one Baptiſm*, are only *diſtinct* Parts of the ſame Church of Chriſt in its proper *Latitude*, all *Members* of this Body, all *Countries* of this Kingdom, all *Apartments* of this great Houſe, all *Companies* of this populous City; and though conſidered as ſeparate with Regard to the *Places*, where they are ſituate, the *Limits* of Dominion, which circumſcribe them, and the temporal *Conſtitutions*, with which they are incorporate, yet ſtill they are but *one* in the Main, and can no farther deſerve the Title of Churches, than as they agree in all *eſſential* Parts with that *univerſal* one, which is diffuſed over the Face of the whole Earth: " (*q*) " For, be they never ſo many, ne- " ver ſo great, *ſays Tertullian*, they are all

* The *Ancients* obſerved a great Difference in the *Manner* of their believing the ſeveral Articles of the *Creed*, and laid a great Streſs upon the Particle IN. They prefixed it (as *Ruffinus* obſerves) before the Words, wherein our Faith in the *Deity* is declared, as IN *God the Father*, IN *his Son Jeſus Chriſt*, and IN *the Holy Ghoſt*; but where the Creed ſpeaks of *Creatures* and *Myſteries*, the Prepoſition IN was not added, and therefore they did not profeſs to believe IN *the Holy Church*, but only to believe *the Holy Church, the Communion of Saints, the Forgiveneſs of Sins*, &c. So that the not prefixing the Particle IN before the *Holy Catholick Church*, and the other Articles, which follow, directs us to believe them after another *Manner*, than the preceding Articles, which have that *Syllable* placed before them; that on the *former* we are to believe as *God*, but the *latter* we are ſimply to believe as *Myſteries* revealed by God; and, to confirm this Diſtinction, we may obſerve farther, that the *Greeks* did not content themſelves with barely ſuppreſſing this *Prepoſition* before *the Holy Catholick Church*, but inſerted likewiſe another *I believe* between that, and the precedent Article of *the Holy Ghoſt*; and accordingly the modern *Greek* Creed (even as the preſent *French* and *Nether Dutch*) runs thus, *I believe in* the Holy Ghoſt, *I believe that Holy Catholick Church*. *King*'s Crit. Hiſt. of the Creed.

(*i*) Acts ii. 47. (*k*) 1 Cor. xii. 12, 13. (*l*) 1 Cor. xi. 3. (*m*) Col. ii. 19. (*n*) Eph. ii. 20, &c. (*o*) Eph. ii. 19. (*p*) Eph. iv. 5. (*q*) De Præſcrip. C. 20.

" the ſame with the firſt *apoſtolical* one, " from which all are derived. Nay, whilſt " they maintain the ſame *Unity* in Doc- " trine, the ſame *Communication* of Peace, " the ſame *Title* of Brotherhood, and the " ſame *common Mark* of Hoſpitality, they " are all *firſt*, all *apoſtolical*.

2. Holineſs. ANOTHER *Property*, aſcribed to the Church, is *Holineſs*: Where, taking the Church for the univerſal Society of *true* Believers, diffuſed through all Ages, diſperſed through all Countries, ſome of which now *ſojourn* on Earth, others *reſide* in Heaven, and others again are not yet entered upon the *Stage* of Life, but are all to be *collected* into one Body, at the *Reſurrection of the juſt*, then may we perceive with what Propriety of this Church, or *general Aſſembly of the Firſt-born* is ſtiled *holy*, ſince this is the *myſtical Body of Chriſt*; whereof he is the *Head and Saviour*; this the *beloved Spouſe of the Lamb*; this the *elect Generation*, the *royal Prieſthood*; and this, in ſhort, the Company, *(r) which God hath purchaſed with his own Blood*, and for which *(s) Chriſt hath delivered himſelf, that he might ſanctify, and cleanſe it with the waſhing of Water by the Word, and preſent it to his Father a glorious Church, holy, and without Blemiſh, not having Spot, or Wrinkle, or any ſuch Thing.*

BUT, foraſmuch as our bleſſed Saviour himſelf compares the *Kingdom of Heaven* (by which he means his Church) to a *Field*, in which Wheat and Tares grow together; to a *Net*, which encloſes both choice and refuſe Fiſh; to a *Floor*, whereon the good Corn and Chaff lie promiſcuouſly; and, by many other Similitudes, ſignifies the Intermixture of bad and good Men in the Chriſtian Communion as long as the World endures; by the *Church* here we may be allowed to underſtand that *whole Body* of People, which makes *outward* Profeſſion of the Religion, that our Lord has inſtituted, and which, though, in great Numbers, ſadly defective in real and *perſonal* Sanctity, we may nevertheleſs pronounce to be *holy*; and that not only, becauſe, where the Hearts of Men are not to be inſpected, there *Charity* obliges us to think the beſt, and where the *outward* Means of Grace are afforded, there we ought to hope for the *inward* Efficacy of it; but becauſe the Church of Chriſt, being erected for holy *Ends*, and governed by holy *Laws*, which it requires all its Members, without Diſtinction, punctually to obſerve, in Order to attain theſe Ends, it is reaſonable to infer, that, not from the *Behaviour* of ſuch, as act contrary to its Rules and Injunctions, but from the proper and natural *Effects*, which it was originally deſigned to produce, its Denomination ſhould be taken; even as the *civil Societies* among us, ſuch as are incorporated for the *Improvement* of *natural Knowledge*, the *Propagation* of the Goſpel, or *Reformation* of Manners, would ſtill retain their proper Appellations, though many of the Members, whereof they are compoſed, ſhould have little or no Regard to, nay, ſhould manifeſtly pervert the *Ends* and Purpoſes of their Inſtitution.

ANOTHER *Title*, that the *Creed* aſcribes to the Chriſtian Church, * is that of *Catholick*, a Term taken from the *Greeks*, and, in Contradiction to the *Jewiſh Oeconomy*, ſuppoſed to denote its *Diffuſiveneſs* all the World over. Under the legal Diſpenſation, *(t) in Judah only* (ſays the Pſalmiſt) *was God known, and his Name was great in Iſrael: In Salem was his Tabernacle, and his Dwelling-place in Sion: He ſhewed his Word unto Jacob, his Statutes and his Judgments unto Iſrael; but he did not deal ſo with other Nations, neither had the Heathen Knowledge of his Laws:* But our Saviour, on the contrary, when he came to erect his Church, *broke down this Wall of Partition*, and extended the *Bounds* of it to the utmoſt Limits of the Earth, in that Commiſſion given to his Apoſtles; *(u) Go ye into all the World, and preach the Goſpel to every Creature*; for *(x) from the riſing of the Sun, even to the going down of the ſame, my Name ſhall be great among the Gentiles, and in every Place, Incenſe ſhall be offered to my Name and pure Offering:* And of the Completion of this Prophecy, Univerſality *in Point of* Place.

* The Word *Catholick* was not *originally* in this Creed, it firſt appeared in that of *Alexander* Biſhop of *Alexandria*, after which we find it in both the Creeds of *Epiphanius*, and then in ſeveral others, from whence the *Latins* received it, as a proper Denotation of its being (as St. *Auſtin* calls it) *not like the Churches of Hereticks, confined within certain Places and Provinces, but enlarged by the Splendor of one Faith, from the riſing of the Sun, to the going down thereof.* Tom. 10. Serm. de Temp. 181. *King*'s Crit. Hiſt. of the Creed.

(r) Acts xx. 28. (s) Eph. v. 25, &c. (t) Pſal. xxlvi. 1. 2. cxlvii. 19. (u) Mark xvi. 15. (x) Mal. i. 11.

Prophecy, we, who live in this Nation, ſo far remote from the Place of its firſt Foundation, and yet make no inconſiderable Part of the Chriſtian Church, are not only a living *Teſtimony*, but, in ſome Meaſure, an *Inducement* to believe, that God, in his good appointed Time, will not be unmindful to perform what he hath further promiſed concerning its Enlargement, *viz.* that (*y*) all the Ends *of the Earth ſhall remember, and turn to the Lord*, and all the Kindreds of the *Nations ſhall worſhip before him*; *for the Kingdoms of the World ſhall become the Kingdoms of Chriſt, he ſhall have Dominion from Sea to Sea, and from the River to the Ends of the Earth.*

And Time. BUT beſides the Univerſality of *Place*, the Word *Catholick* may extend to an Univerſality of *Time*, and, in this Senſe, denotes the Church's *Perpetuity*, or according to the Predictions concerning it, that it ſhould (*z*) *never be deſtroyed*, but *eſtabliſhed for ever as the Son and Moon throughout all Generations:* and, in Confirmation of this, we find our bleſſed Saviour making two Promiſes, one more eſpecially to *Peter*, and the other to the whole *College* of the Apoſtles. (*a*) *Thou art Peter, and upon this Rock will I build my Church, and the Gates of Hell ſhall not prevail againſt it*; for (*b*) *lo! I am with you always, even unto the End of the World.* Now, whether it were St. *Peter*'s *Zeal*, or St. *Peter*'s Confeſſion, that our Saviour intended to make the Foundation of his Church, if by *Hell* we are to underſtand the *Devil*, and his *Angels*, inhabiting thoſe Regions of Darkneſs, and, by the *Gates of Hell*, the *Power* and *Policy* of theſe infernal Spirits, then will the Senſe of the Promiſe amount to this—"That, notwithſtanding "the Devil, and his Inſtruments, wicked Men, and wicked Spirits, are utter "Enemies to the Progreſs of my Religion, "and do all that in them lies to obſtruct "the Salvation of Souls; yet all in vain. "Chriſtianity ſhall ſtand and flouriſh in "Deſpite of them; and all their Subtilty "and Strength ſhall not be able to bring "about their wicked Purpoſes to defeat it: "For lo, *I am with you*, and, though in "Perſon removed to Heaven, yet, in Virtue of my *Omnipreſence*, will continually watch over you, ſo that (*c*) *he, "who toucheth you, toucheth the Apple of "mine Eye. I am with you*; and, in "your Propagation of my Goſpel, will give "you ſuch Powers, as will bear down all "Oppoſition, and (*d*) *a Mouth, and Wiſdom, that all your Adverſaries ſhall not "be able to gainſay, or reſiſt. I am with "you* in my *Spirit*, to comfort and ſupport you in all the Difficulties, you are "to encounter, to ſecure you from Error, "and to *lead you into all Truth*: and *I am "with you*, in your *Succeſſors, even unto "the End of the World*; and therefore "be the *Perſecutions*, that ſhall enſue, "never ſo grievous, ſome good Men there "ever ſhall be, of Courage and Conſtancy "to own their *religious Principles*, in Deſpite of Threatnings, Tortures, and "Death: Be the *Hereſies*, that ſhall ſpring "up, never ſo ſubtil and prevailing, Men of "Learning and Sagacity ſhall at the ſame "Time ariſe in my Church, powerful "enough to detect and confute them, and, "though, in ſome Places, there may be a "*falling away*, yet in others there ſhall be a "*Reviviſcence*; for (*e*) *I will not ſuffer "my Truth to fail, my Covenant will I not "break, nor alter the Thing that is gone out "of my Lips.*"

THIS ſeems to be an eaſy *Paraphraſe* upon our Saviour's Words; and, accordingly, if we look back into *Hiſtory*, we ſhall find, that (*f*) *upon this Rock* the Chriſtian Church ſtood, when both *Jews* and *Gentiles* (agreed in nothing elſe, but their Enmity againſt Chriſtians) employed ſo much *Malice* and Subtilty to cruſh it, in its *Infancy*. *Upon this Rock it ſtood*, unſhaken, and unmoved by the Violence of *ten* ſucceſſive *Perſecutions*, when the *Blood* of the *Martyrs* became the *Seed* of the Church, and the Things, that were intended to ſuppreſs it, proved the Means of its Advancement. *Upon this Rock it ſtood*, amidſt the many violent *Concuſſions*, which tore in Pieces the *Roman* Empire, firm and undiſturbed, while all the World beſides was tottering, and breaking about it. *Upon this Rock it ſtood*, when divided by *Hereſies* and *Schiſms*, and, though its Truth was ſometimes defaced (*g*) *by the Slight of Men, and cunning Craftineſs, whereby they lay in wait to deceive*, yet, at length, did (*h*) *its Light riſe in Obſcurity, and its Darkneſs*

(*y*) Pſalm. lxxii. (*z*) Dan. ii. 44. and Pſ. lxxii. 5. (*a*) Matt. xvi. 18. (*b*) Matt. xxviii. 20. (*c*) Zec. ii. 8. (*d*) Luke xxi. 15. (*e*) Pſal. lxxxix. 33, 34. (*f*) *Stanhope*'s Ep. and Goſp. and St. *John*'s Ser. (*g*) Eph. iv. 14. (*h*) Iſa. lviii. 10.

Darkneſs became as the Noon Day. Upon this Rock it ſtood, and oppoſed the Flood of *Ignorance* and *Barbarity*, which, in ſucceeding Ages, ſtrove to overwhelm it, and, after a long Night of Darkneſs, *emerged* at laſt, and recovered its primitive Luſtre: And *upon this Rock it now ſtands*, and we truſt will ever ſtand, reformed from the Errors and Corruptions, with which it was once polluted, and (*k*) *growing in all Things unto him, who is the Head, in the Unity of the Faith, and of the Knowledge of the Son of God, until it come unto the Meaſure of the Stature of the Fulneſs of Chriſt.*

The Communion *of* Saints, *and wherein it conſiſts.*

AFTER the *Deſcription* of the Church in its ſeveral *Properties*, the Creed numbers up the many great *Privileges*, to which we are intitled, by being made Members of it; and, of theſe, the *firſt* is * *the Communion of Saints*, whereof the Apoſtle gives us a moſt glorious Deſcription. (*l*) *Ye are come*, ſays he, *unto Mount Sion, and the City of the living God, the heavenly Jeruſalem, and to an innumerable Company of Angels; to the general Aſſembly and Church of the Firſt-born, which are written in Heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the Spirits of juſt Men made perfect, and to Jeſus the Mediator of the new Covenant.* Our Communion with *God the Father*, as he is our *Creator*, and the Sovereign *Judge of all*; with *God the Son*, as he is our *Redeemer*, and *the Mediator of the new Covenant*; and with *God the holy Ghoſt*, as he is our *Comforter*, and the *Sanctifier* of our Wills and Affections, compriſes in it vaſt and inconceivable Benefits, but this is not the main *Intendment* of the Creed. With the *Angels* likewiſe, as they are our *Fellow-Servants*, and Fellow-Subjects, *miniſtring Spirits to the Heirs of Salvation*, and, together with us, (*m*) *Worſhippers of the Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, of whom the whole Family in Heaven and Earth is named*, we may very properly be ſaid to hold Communion: But our Relation in this Capacity is more immediately to that Company, or Society of holy Perſons, (*n*) *who are called to be Saints*, and, accordingly, are (*o*) *ſanctified by Faith, that is in Jeſus Chriſt*, whether they be the Saints, *that are now on* Earth, or thoſe, *that have departed this Life.*

Both with thoſe that are alive.

WITH the *Saints*, that are on Earth, our Communion conſiſts in this—that we are all *Servants* of the ſame God, all *ſanctified* by the ſame Spirit, all *Profeſſors* of the ſame Faith, all *Heirs* of the ſame Promiſes, all *Members* of the ſame myſtical Body of Chriſt, all *governed* by the ſame Laws, all *Partakers* of the ſame Ordinances of the Goſpel: and, in Teſtimony of our abiding in this Communion, our Duty muſt be—to endeavour to keep this *Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace*, by joining together in a viſible and external Fellowſhip of Love and Charity; by adhering to the Doctrines of the Apoſtles, and *holding faſt that Form of ſound Words, which was once delivered to the Saints*; (*p*) by declining *fooliſh Queſtions, and Strifes of Words, whereof cometh Envy, Railings, evil Surmiſing, and perverſe Diſputations*; (*q*) *by marking, and avoiding thoſe, who cauſe Diviſions and Offences, contrary to the Doctrine, which we have learned*; by (*r*) *not neglecting the aſſembling ourſelves together*, in the proper Places appointed for religious Offices, *as the Manner of ſome is*; by uniting in the ſame *Form* of publick Worſhip, and partaking of the ſame

* The *Donatiſts*, though *orthodox* in Matters of Faith and Doctrine, by Reaſon of a Quarrel at the Election of *Cecilian* to the Biſhoprick of *Carthage*, about the End of the *tenth Perſecution*, engaged themſelves in a long, violent, and deplorable *Schiſm*, and arrived at laſt to that Height of Pride, Faction, and Uncharitableneſs, as to account thoſe of their own *Party*, who were confined to a little Part of *Africa*, *the only holy Catholick Church*, and to affirm of all other Churches, both in *Europe*, and *Aſia*, as well as other Parts of *Africa*, that they were not Churches of *Jeſus Chriſt*, but *Synagogues of Satan*, and that their Ordinances and Adminiſtrations were mere *Nullities*, and of no Validity at all, for which Reaſon they proceeded to *re-baptize*, and perform every Thing *de novo* on thoſe, who revolted from the Church to their Sect or Faction. In Oppoſition to theſe arrogant Opinions and Practices, it is highly probable, that this Clauſe of the *Communion of Saints* was added to the Creed, as *explanatory* of the *holy Catholick Church*, and to ſignify to us, that, though there was but one *univerſal* Church, yet the *particular* Churches and Members thereof maintained a ſtrict Union and Correſpondence with each other; that whatſoever was regularly performed in *one* Church, was eſteemed valid and obligatory by *all* others, or that, though the *univerſal* Church was neceſſarily divided into many *Particulars*, yet the Chriſtian *Unity* was not thereby deſtroyed, but was ſtill preſerved by their reciprocal Agreement and Communion; *foraſmuch as in every Place where there are Chriſtians, there the Catholick Church is found*, Auguſtin de unit. Eccleſ. C. 12. *King*'s Crit. Hiſt. of the Creed.

(*k*) Eph. iv. 13, &c. (*l*) Heb. xii. 22, 23. (*m*) Eph. iii. 14, 15. (*n*) 1 Cor. i. 2. (*o*) Acts xxvi. 18. (*p*) 1 Tim. vi. 4, 5. (*q*) Rom. xvi. 17. (*r*) Heb. x. 25.

ſame *Sacraments*; and, laſtly, by mutually aſſiſting, relieving, and comforting each other, that (in the *Phraſe* of the Apoſtle) (*s*) *there may be no Schiſm in the Body, but all Members may have the ſame Care one for another*, inſomuch *that, if one Member ſuffer, all the Members may ſuffer with it, or one Member be honoured, all the Members rejoice with it.*

And thoſe that are departed.

NOR muſt it be diſſembled, that with the *Saints departed*, or *the Spirits of juſt Men made perfect*, we have the ſame Fellowſhip and Communion: (*t*) Of this Communion the *myſtical* Union between Chriſt and his Church, and the ſpiritual *Conjunction* of the Members to the Head, is the true Foundation; and therefore, as Death cannot diſſolve this Union, the Communion muſt abide for ever, becauſe the Foundation for ever continues the ſame. Under this View, the Church *triumphant* above are, together with us, *Servants* of the ſame ſupreme King; have been *redeemed* by the Blood of the ſame *Saviour*; been *guided*, and ſanctified by the ſame Spirit; been made *Partakers* of the ſame Remiſſion of Sins; are admitted into the ſame Covenant of *Grace*, which conveys a Right to the ſame Kingdom of *Glory*; and live in the ſame *Hopes* and Expectations of being received into a *full* Poſſeſſion of their Inheritance, at the *Reſurrection of the Juſt*. (*u*) Their Affection for their Fellow-Members here on Earth is not diminiſhed, we may ſuppoſe, but increaſed rather by the Exaltation of their Condition: but what they do for us in Heaven particularly, or what we ought to perform in Reference to them, beſides a *reverential* Reſpect, and Study of *Imitation*, we have no Intimation given us in Scripture. (*x*) Bleſs God we may for the Grace, he was pleaſed to beſtow upon them, by which they were delivered from the Sins and Temptations of this wicked World, and enabled to *perſevere* in a Courſe of Piety even unto the End. To be willing and deſirous, whenever it ſhall pleaſe God to call us, to be gathered to the Number of theſe bleſſed Spirits, theſe celeſtial Lovers, ſhould be the great *Option* of our Souls, but to make them at this Diſtance, the Objects of our religious Invocation, is what they themſelves (as (*y*) we find the Angel in the *Revelation* was) perhaps may be offended at. The only ſafe Way of doing them Honour, is, (*z*) *to take them* (as the Apoſtle propoſes them) *for an Example of ſuffering Affliction, and Patience.* Their Courage and Conſtancy, their Sincerity and Devotion, the Purity of their Faith, and the Innocency of their Converſation ſhould be the Patterns always before our Eyes: (*a*) For, when all is done, the beſt and moſt acceptable *Homage*, that we can pay them, is, that of forming our Conduct upon the *Model* of their *Graces*, and aſpiring after the *Weight* and Brightneſs of their *Crowns*.

The OBJECTION.

" BUT, whatever Notion we may " have with the *Communion of the* " *Saints departed*, it is certainly very *dif-* " *ficult* to account for our Fellowſhip with " them, that are on Earth; or to ſatisfy " ourſelves, how ſo many different *Church-* " *es*, ſituate in ſo many different *Places*, " and ſubjected to ſo many different *Go-* " *vernments*, can poſſibly agree in the ſame " *Terms* of Communion. The only Way " to ſettle this Matter upon a ſure *Baſis*, " is to reſolve it into the *Virtue* and Or- " thodoxy of particular Chriſtians, becauſe " he, that retaineth the *Faith*, and lives " *righteouſly*, can never be deemed a *Schiſ-* " *matick* even though he adjoins himſelf to " no Sect or religious Aſſembly whatever. " (*b*) A competent *Knowledge* of Religion " is indeed neceſſary; but when once this " is attained (by what Means ſoever it is " attained) the Man, by holding the Doc- " trines that are ſound, and keeping the " Commandments of God inviolate, can- " not but be *ſaved*, without adhering to " any *particular* Communion. For as " the true Church of Chriſt conſiſts on- " ly of *ſuch*, as have a Title to God's Fa- " vour by the Integrity of their *Faith*, " and other Chriſtian *Graces*, whoever is " adorned with theſe Qualifications, main- " tains a *Communion* with Chriſt, and en- " joys all the *Privileges* inſuant thereupon, " though he never aſſociates himſelf with " any viſible Body of Chriſtians, which

(*s*) 1 Cor. xii. 25, 26. (*t*) *Pearſon* on the Creed. (*u*) Ibid. (*x*) *Wake* on the Ch. Cat. (*y*) Rev. xix. 10. and xxii. 9. (*z*) James v. 10. (*a*) *Stanhope*'s Ep. and Goſp. Vol. IV. (*b*) *Potter*'s Ch. Government.

" are (in the Groſs) ſo very corrupt, that " we cannot ſee with what Propriety they " can be termed *holy*, ſince moſt of them " are the very Perſons, with whom the " Apoſtle charges us ſo ſtrictly, (*c*) *not* " *to keep Company, nor ſo much as to eat.*"

Anſwered, by ſhewing, that notwithſtanding the Diviſion *of the Catholick Church, it was ſtill* one.

OUR bleſſed Saviour, to ſhew the ſmall Beginning, and large Increaſe of his Church, compares it to *a Grain of Muſtard Seed*, (*d*) which, though the *leaſt of all Seeds*, yet when it *is grown up, is the greateſt among the Herbs*, and (in the *eaſtern* Countries more eſpecially) *becometh a Tree, ſo that the Birds of the Air come, and lodge in the Branches of it*. The Chriſtian Church (as we ſaid before) began in one Congregation at *Jeruſalem*; but, like a fruitful Stock, it ſoon branched itſelf out far and wide, and, in different Countries, multiplied into many *diſtinct* Congregations. Theſe Congregations were no more, at firſt, than *private* Aſſemblies of Chriſtians, who uſed to meet together in the Houſe of ſome Perſon of Diſtinction among the Brethren; and, for this Reaſon, we read of (*e*) *the Church in the Houſe of Aquila*, and (*f*) *of the Church in the Houſe of Nymphas, &c.* In which Houſes, very probably, there were *upper Rooms* (as the Manner of the *Jews* was) conſecrated, and ſet apart for religious Uſes, wherein, not only the Believers of the Family, but ſeveral other neighbouring Chriſtians, were wont to aſſemble for the publick Exerciſe of divine Worſhip. But as theſe Congregations grew more and more numerous, there was a Neceſſity of collecting them into *one Body*, which was called the *Church* of ſuch a *City*, or *Country*, and of putting them under the Care and Inſpection of ſome Perſon of a more eminent Station and Dignity than others, who was commonly ſtiled their *Biſhop*: and, (*g*) as Chriſtianity ſtill farther increaſed, there was a farther Neceſſity to enlarge the *epiſcopal* Office, and, in every *Metropolis* (as the *Romans* called it) or mother City of each Province, to inſtitute an *Arch-Biſhop*, or *Metropolitan*, who had *eccleſiaſtical* Juriſdiction over all the Churches in the *Province*.

Now, as the Diſtribution of the *Catholick* Church into diſtinct Congregations was made for the Convenience of *divine Worſhip*, and becauſe it was impoſſible for the *whole* Church, after it was thus enlarged, to meet together in one Place, and to celebrate divine Offices by the Miniſtry of one *Paſtor*; ſo the Diſtribution of it into particular Churches, conſiſting of ſeveral Congregations, and into *Dioceſſes*, and *Provinces*, conſiſting of a Multitude of theſe Churches, was made for the Convenience of *Government*, and *Diſcipline*, which, in ſo extenſive a Sphere, as the whole Church was, could not have been executed with ſuch Order and Regularity, as was requiſite; but ſtill theſe ſeveral *Diſtributions* did no Ways affect its *Unity*. Different *Denominations* indeed it might and did receive, according to the different Places, where it was ſituated, but, notwithſtanding this, it every where continued the *ſame*, even as the *Ocean* is one entire Element, although it aſſumes different Titles, according to the Shores or Regions, which it waſhes, or ſurrounds.

Wherein that Unity *did conſiſt, and what Chriſtians did to maintain* their Communion.

THE ſhort of the Matter is, (*h*) as all Chriſtians do enjoy in common the ſame Privileges and Immunities, they muſt, of Neceſſity, be of the ſame Community. It is by their peculiar Faith, and Laws, and Rites of Worſhip, that they are diſtinguiſhed from all the World beſides; and therefore, ſince theſe *Peculiarities*, by the very Inſtitution of Chriſtian Society, are made common to all Chriſtian People, the Suppoſition of *ſeparate* and *independent* Communities muſt needs be *incongruous*, where all Things are in common, and where there is nothing, in ſhort, to *ſeparate* or diſtinguiſh them from each other. It was from a Senſe of this, that the *ancient* Chriſtians made uſe of ſuch various *Methods* to maintain an inviolable Communion, and Correſpondency between themſelves, and to preſerve the *Union* of their particular Churches whole and entire. (*i*) For this Purpoſe *canonical* Letters (as they are called) were in great Eſteem among them; ſome of which were *communicatory*, ſuch, as a Biſhop *elect* to any Church ſent to the Biſhops of other Churches, to notify his Election, and they, in Acknowledgment of his Title, were wont to return: Others *dimiſſory*, granted by Biſhops to Miniſters going into another *Dioceſs*, and, in Conſideration of their *Orthodoxy*, and *Innocency* of Life, requiring of the Biſhop thereof, that they might be received, and incorporated into the Number of their Clergy;

(*c*) 1 Cor. v. 9, 10. (*d*) Matt. xiii. 31. (*e*) 1 Cor. xvi. 19. (*f*) Col. iv. 15. (*g*) *Cave*'s Primit. Chriſt. (*h*) *Scot*'s Mediator. (*i*) *Cave*'s Prim. Chriſt.

gy; and others *commendatory*, granted to all, both Clergy and Laity, that were to travel abroad, as *Tickets of Hospitality*, in Virtue of which they met with a Kind *Reception*, and were admitted to *communicate* in all the Churches, through which they were to pass. By these Acts the Prudence of those (*k*) Times thought fit to preserve an Harmony and Communion between particular Churches; to which the *Maxims*, that were then strongly imbibed, did not a little contribute, *viz.* that, although the *universal* Church was composed of *different*, and almost innumerable Members or Churches, yet, in the Sense of Scripture, it was but *one Body*; that all the *legal* Acts, and Determinations of any *particular* Church were to be esteemed as the Acts of the universal *one*; that all *schismatical* and factious Spirits, who rent, and divide *one* Church were to be condemned, and stigmatized, as Dividers and Disturbers of the *whole*; and that * whoever was *excommunicated* in any one Church, was not to be received into Communion by another, until he had made *Satisfaction* to that, by which he was censured; so *punctual* Observers were the first Professors of Christianity of that *apostolick* Injunction; (*l*) *Mark those, who cause Divisions and Offences, contrary to the Doctrine, which ye have received, and avoid them.*

The Notion of Schism.

AND from hence we may perceive what the true Nature of *Schism* is, and how incongruous it is to think of holding Fellowship with the *universal* Church, while we *separate* from that particular Part of it, under which we live, and whereof we ought to be Members, so long as it imposes no *Terms of* Communion upon us, but what are truly *catholick*. If indeed it requires us to embrace such *Doctrines*, as are contrary to the Word of God, to join in such a *Form* of *Worship*, or to comply with such *Rites* and Ceremonies, as are abhorrent to the very End and Design of it, then are we to listen to the Voice from Heaven, (*m*) *come out of her, my People, that ye be not Partakers of her Sins, and that ye receive not of her Plagues:* But where this is not the Case, and yet Men, out of a Spirit of Pride or Contention, a Love of Singularity, a Desire of Applause, or any other vicious Affection, abandon the publick Offices of the *national* Church, and, to the Disturbance of its Peace and Order, form separate Sects and Parties in it, this is properly the Sin of *Schism*, which St. *Paul* so earnestly exhorts his *Corinthians* to avoid, (*n*) *I beseech you, brethren, by the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that there be no Divisions among you, but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same Mind, and in the same Judgment.*

And Necessity *of communicating.*

FROM hence likewise we may perceive, how wild and extravagant it is, to talk of a Christianity *at large* without Relation to a Church, or to imagine, that our Knowledge of the Christian Religion, and the *Orthodoxy* of our Faith, (be they never so perfect,) can excuse us from the Obligation of holding Communion with some Society of Christians: For, (*o*) since the Church is a *Society* of God's own Appointment, and, in its *original Constitution*, fitted and designed for the Reception of all Mankind, this is a sufficient Demonstration, that his Will and Pleasure is, that all should be both admitted into it, and continue Members of it: Nor can we conceive, considering it as an *outward* and *visible* Society, where publick *Rulers* are appointed to govern, wherein the same *Faith* is constantly confessed, the solemn *Worship* of God is daily frequented, and the visible *Sacraments* of Baptism and the Lord's Supper celebrated by all the Members of it, how an *invisible* Communion with Christ can be maintained by such, as wilfully and scornfully refuse to join with those, that are Partakers of these *Ordinances*. A mere partaking of these Ordinances indeed, when not accompanied with *Faith* and *Obedience*, does no Ways entitle us to any of those *inward* Blessings, which they are designed to confer; but still these inward Blessings cannot, in an ordinary Way, be attained without

* An eminent Example of this we have in the Heretick *Marcion*, who, being ejected from the Church by his own Father, the Bishop of *Sinope* in *Pontus*, applied himself to the Church of *Rome* to be admitted to Communion there, but his Application was rejected with this Answer——*That they could not do it without the Permission of his Father, because the Faith is one, and the Concord is one; and therefore we cannot contradict our Reverend Fellow-minister, but your Father. Epiphan. Adver. Hær. Marcion.* *King*'s Crit. Hist. of the Creed.

(*k*) Crit. Hist. of the Creed. (*l*) Rom. xvi. 17. (*m*) Rev. xviii. 4. (*n*) 1 Cor. i. 10. (*o*) Bp. *Potter* of Ch. Government.

without our *outward* communicating in the Ordinances. In Reference to one of them our Saviour ſays expreſsly, (*p*) *he that believeth, and is baptized, ſhall be ſaved*; but now, to ſuppoſe that a Man may keep God's Commandments and be acceptable to him, without being received into the Chriſtian Church when he has an Oppportunity by *Baptiſm*, implies a manifeſt Contradiction, ſince it is one of the *firſt* and chief Commandments of God, that all Men ſhould be thus received. In a Word, whoever *refuſes* to be admitted into, or, without a ſufficient Cauſe, *alienates* himſelf from the Society of Chriſtians, can hold no Communion with Chriſt, nor have a Title to the Privileges of his Church any more, than a Member diſſevered from the Body can receive vital Influence from its Head; and therefore, to conclude this Part of the Anſwer in the remarkable Words of St. *Auſtin*; (*q*) *Whoever is ſeparated from the Catholick Church, however worthy of Praiſe he may think himſelf to live in all other Reſpects, yet, by Reaſon of this one Wickedneſs, that he is disjoined from the Unity of Chriſt, he ſhall not have Life, but the Wrath of God abideth on him.*

No Communion perfect, and yet may be ſtiled holy.

The *Catbari* in the *Eaſt*, the *Donatiſts* in the *South*, and the *Novatians* in the *Weſt*, (who were properly all one *Faction* under different Denominations,) placed a great Deal of Religion in their *Separation* from the *Catholick* Church: for ſuch they accounted the Impurity of its Members, that they thought themſelves in Danger of contracting Stain and Pollution from their Communion with it. They were full with the Notion of a Church *without Spot, or Wrinkle, or any ſuch Thing*; but this is an Happineſs, not to be expected on this Side Heaven. (*r*) The *Jewiſh* Church, when in its greateſt Proſperity, had ſome, that worſhipped the *Golden Calf*; others, that *offered their Sons and Daughters* unto *Molock*, thouſands, that *bowed the Knee* to *Baal*; and ten thouſands, that ſacrificed in the *Groves*, and in other prohibited Places; and yet with this Church the Saints and Prophets of old, joined in God's publick Worſhip. The Chriſtian Church, when there were not many more Members of it, than the *twelve Apoſtles*, at *Jeruſalem*, had a *Judas* that betrayed his Maſter, and (*s*) a *Nicodemus*, that was afraid to own him; in *Samaria*, a *Simon Magus*, the Projector of moſt of thoſe *Hereſies*, that afterwards ſprung up; in *Corinth*, factious and ſeditious Spirits, that could hardly be controlled, and in the ſeven Churches of *Aſia*, ſuch a general *Depravation* of Faith and Manners, as ended, in a ſhort Time, in an utter Extinction of the Light of the Goſpel. So that a Church exempt from Error and Corruption is for ever to be deſpair'd of: And yet we may obſerve, that the *Jews*, as degenerate as they were, are frequently, in *the Old Teſtament*, called (*t*) *a Kingdom of Prieſts, and an holy Nation*; becauſe God had choſen them out from the reſt of the World, and ſet them apart for his *peculiar People*; even as the Creed ſtiles the Members of particular Churches *Saints and holy*, (the *elect*, the *beloved of God*, the *Called of Jeſus Chriſt*, ſays the *New Teſtament*) becauſe, by their Profeſſion and Baptiſm (which is a Sign and Seal of *Purification*,) they are ſeparated from the reſt of Mankind, and devoted to the pure and holy Service of God, through *Jeſus Chriſt*.

The Apoſtle's Rule of withdrawing *from the wicked, explained.*

But notwithſtanding this *Separation*, too lamentable a Truth it is, that, in the Chriſtian Communion, there are many ſcandalous and *diſorderly* Livers, and (*u*) *from theſe*, it cannot be denied, that the Apoſtle requires us to *withdraw ourſelves*, and *to have no Company with them, that they may be aſhamed*; but then we muſt remember, that this was a *Rule of Diſcipline*, peculiar to the firſt Ages of Chriſtianity. (*x*) For, when the *Authority* of the eſtabliſhed Guides, and the *Awfulneſs* of the Church Cenſures proved ineffectual to reclaim notorious Offenders, the Apoſtles ordered all *private* Chriſtians to ſhun their Company and Acquaintance, till thereby they had *ſhamed* them out of their evil Courſes. This was a wiſe Method in the Infancy of the Church, while ſcandalous Livers were few in Number, and had not many Abettors. But, when once Chriſtianity became the *common* Religion, and the Multitude of the *vicious* and profane were ſufficient to ſupport themſelves, if all the *godly* ſhould decline them, the Caſe then was widely different, ſince, to renounce the Converſation of the wicked, in ſuch Circumſtances,

(*p*) Mark xvi. 16. (*q*) Epiſt. 152. (*r*) *Heylyn* on the Creed. (*s*) John xix. 39.
(*t*) Exod. xix. 6. (*u*) 2 Theſſ. iii. 6, 14. (*x*) *Kettlewell* on the Sacrament.

ces, had been provoking them to combine into united Numbers, making them desperate indeed, as well as secluding them from the Opportunities of Repentance: So long then as this *Rule* was prudent and practicable, it had its Effect in the Christian Oeconomy, but when the State of Things came to be altered, it vanished by Degrees, and, as some other Things, designed as *temporary* Expedients only, came to be laid aside. It is to be observed however, that, even in the Apostles Times, and when it was most in Force, it was never intended to forbid private Christians from joining with *Sinners*, when they met together in the *publick* Offices of Religion. Prayers and Sacraments are a Duty, we all owe to Almighty God, and are indispensibly bound to perform, however *ill Men* may intrude to do the same: And if our blessed Saviour refused not to keep Company, and to eat with *Judas* himself; if the Church of *Corinth*, and other Churches, did not neglect to assemble themselves together, because wicked and disorderly Persons frequented their Communion; what are we, that we should be so *squeamish* and supercilious? Since the *Condition* of Life is plainly such, that all *Communities* must have corrupt Members, and, in every Body of Men, there will be *vicious*, as well as *godly* Persons, if we must decline all Manner of Society and Fellowship, where ill Men mix and partake in it, then, in the *Apostle*'s Opinion, (*y*) *must we needs go out of the World*; and therefore, in Cases of this Nature, his Advice is certainly the best, (*z*) *let every Man prove his own Work*, to acquit himself well in his proper Capacity, and *then shall he have Rejoicing in himself alone, for every Man must bear his own Burden.*

The DISSERTATION.

Of the Ministers and Rulers of the Church.

A distinct Order of Men in the Church, from the very first;

WHOEVER is minded to look into the Records of *Antiquity*, whether sacred or profane, will soon perceive, that, from the first Beginning of the World, there was always a *distinct Order* of Men to preside in religious Matters, and to exercise the *ministerial* Function. Under the *patriarchal Oeconomy*, both before, and after the Flood, the *sacerdotal* Power and Office was not communicated to *all*, but to some particular Persons only: It was reserved as an Honour for the *First-born*, and discharged by the Masters and Governors of their respective Families. Under the *legal*, when the *Priesthood* was more solemnly established, the publick Administration of it belonged to a peculiar Set of Men; for, by God's own Appointment, it was, that (*a*) *Aaron, and his Sons were anointed* and *sanctified*, that *they might minister to him in the Priest's Office*; and under the *evangelical*, though, for some Time, the whole Ministry was vested in Christ, the *High Priest and Bishop of our Souls*, yet, when it was imparted, he did not confer it on *every* Believer, but only on his (*b*) *twelve* Apostles, and *seventy Disciples*, to whom he gave Commission to preach the Gospel, and a Promise to continue with them, and their Successors, *even unto the End of the World.*

And the Reasons for it.

THUS the Christian Church began, and thus it all along subsisted, having a select Company of Men to attend its Offices; (*c*) *for are all Apostles, are all Prophets, are all Teachers?* says St. *Paul*, plainly intimating, that they were not so, but that these Dignities and Employments were committed to the Hands of peculiar Persons. The Work of the *Ministry* indeed, as it respects Instruction, Worship, and Government, is of such a Nature, that it could not be executed by *all* in common; and therefore there was a Necessity to make Choice of some, to set them apart, and, by a peculiar Designation, to distinguish them from the rest, that they might make it their Business with more Exactness to discharge so important a Trust. These we call at present the *Clergy*: And with Reference to them it is that the Apostle's Exhortation to the Laity runs in this Strain —— (*d*) *I beseech you, Brethren, to know them, who labour among you, and who are*

(*y*) 1 Cor. v. 10. (*z*) Gal. vi. 4, 5. (*a*) Exod. xl. 13, 15. (*b*) Luke vi. 13. and x. 1.
(*c*) 1 Cor. xii. 29. (*d*) 1 Thess. v. 12, 13.

over you in the Lord, and admoniſh you, and to eſteem them very highly for their Works Sake. Nor was this peculiar to the *Chriſtians* only, but, if we look into the *Heathen* World, we ſhall find, that the common *Suggeſtions* of Nature, and the *innate* Reverence of a Deity, could inſtruct them in theſe two Points——That ſome proper Perſons were to be appointed for the Performance of the *Myſteries* and Ceremonies of their Religion; and that, whoever was thus appointed, was thenceforward to be looked upon as a *ſacred* Perſon, and, for his *Works Sake*, held in ſuch high Eſteem and Veneration, that * even Princes and Emperors have thought themſelves greatly dignified, in having that *Character* conferred upon them.

The ſeveral Perſons and Offices extraordinary *in the* primitive *Church.*

WHAT various *Titles* and Offices are aſcribed to ſome of the *firſt* Chriſtians, is an eaſier Matter to *relate*, than it is to *explain* their different Significations. St. *Paul*, in his Epiſtle to the *Corinthians*, enumerates them in this Manner——*(e) God hath ſet ſome in the Church,* † *firſt Apoſtles, ſecondly Prophets, thirdly Teachers, after that Miracles, then Gifts of Healings, Helps, Governments, Diverſities of Tongues*; which, in his Epiſtle to the *Epheſians*, he recites with this Variation, *(f) and he gave ſome Apoſtles, and ſome Prophets, and ſome Evangeliſts, and ſome Paſtors and Teachers, for the perfecting of the Saints, for the Work of the Miniſtry, for the Edifying of the Body of Chriſt.* But whether any of theſe (except the *Apoſtles*) were *fixed* and permanent Offices in the Church, or only *extraordinary* Gifts, *occaſionally* employed to ſupply the *preſent* Want of proper Miniſters, may be juſtly queſtioned. *(g)* The Apoſtles, we may obſerve, uſed not to ordain *Officers* in any Place, before the *ſecond* Time of their coming thither, but, when they had preached the Goſpel, they left the *new* Converts to be farther inſtructed, either *(h)* by ſome of the Miniſters, who attended them, and ſtaid behind for that Purpoſe, or by ſuch *itinerant Miſſionaries*, as travelled from Place to Place, according to the *Appointment* of the Apoſtles, or the ſpecial Direction of the *Holy Ghoſt*; and theſe, very probably, were the *Prophets, Evangeliſts, Paſtors, and Teachers*, which the Apoſtle here mentions; becauſe, till a State Miniſtry could conveniently be fixed, the Offices of publick Worſhip and Inſtruction were, in ſeveral Places, performed by ſuch Perſons,

* Of what great Eſteem the *Prieſthood* was among the *Heathens*, is manifeſt from what we read in ſundry of their Authors, *viz.* that, among the *Egyptians*, the *King* was either choſen out of the *Prieſts*, or was obliged to be of that *Order*, before his Election; that, among the *Perſians*, their *Magi* are deſcribed by *Porphyry*, as *divine Philoſophers* and Servants of their God, *a great and venerable Order of Men*; that, among the *Indians*, their *Brachmans* were exempted from all legal Penalties, and reſorted to, both by Prince and People, for their Prayers and Advice; that among our *Anceſtors*, the *Britons*, their *Druids* were held in the higheſt Honour and Eſteem, judging all Cauſes, both publick and private, and diſtributing likewiſe Rewards and Puniſhments: That, among polite Nations, ſuch as the *Greeks*, it was reputed a ſpecial Honour to make the moſt eminent Perſons *Prieſts*, with the Title of the *Chiefs of that Province*, Acts xix. 31; where they were created *Preſidents of the Sacrifices*; that among the *Romans* there were ſeveral *Colleges* of Prieſts, to whom the higheſt Reſpect was paid, and by whom the principal Offices of State were managed; that *Numa*, the ſecond King of *Rome*, executed the Office of *chief Flamen*, and, from the Time of *Auguſtus*, the Emperors were always admitted to the Dignity of *High Prieſts*, until the Reign of *Gratian*, who, out of Conſcience, refuſed it, becauſe it was a *Pagan* Office. *Comber* on the Office of Ordination.

† Our learned *Whitby*, in his Annotations upon this Place, explains theſe Offices in this Manner——By *Prophets* he underſtands ſuch extraordinary Perſons, as were frequent in the Beginning of Chriſtianity, who not only *foretold* future Events, but were enabled to teach others likewiſe by immediate Inſpiration: By *Teachers* ſuch, as, having received the *Doctrine of Faith* from the Apoſtles, went about divers Countries, preaching to others for their Converſion, and *building* up the Churches, which the Apoſtles had *planted*; but if they happened to preach to thoſe, who had *never* heard of the Goſpel before, they were then called *Evangeliſts*, and ſometimes *Apoſtles*: By *Helps* he means the *Deacons*, and ſuch other Officers, whoſe Buſineſs it was not only to miniſter to the ſick and poor, but to be converſant likewiſe in the Diſpenſation of the Word and Sacraments; but this ſeems rather to be an *extraordinary* Office; as by *Governments* may be intended, not ſo much the *Rulers* of the Church, as Men, who had the *Gift of diſcerning Spirits*, becauſe the Word, which we render *Governments*, does frequently, in the Old Teſtament, ſignify *wiſe Counſels*: And as the other Gifts of *healing*, of *Miracles*, and of *Tongues* were manifeſtly peculiar to the *primitive* Church, ſo we may ſuppoſe of the reſt, becauſe, when the *extraordinary* Gifts of the Church came to ceaſe, their very Names grew out of Uſe, inſomuch that, in *ſucceeding* Ages, we meet not with the leaſt Mention made of them. *Whitby*'s Annot. on Eph. iv. 11.

(e) 1 Cor. xii. 28. (f) Eph. iv. 11, 12. (g) A. Bp. *Potter* of Church Government, and *Rogers*'s Ser. (h) Acts xvii. 14, 15.

Perſons, as were either *occaſionally* inſpired, or *ſupernaturally* gifted. Theſe Perſons indeed were of ſingular Uſe in the Church, and helped to ſupply the Apoſtles Abſence; but, when the Apoſtles returned again to *ſtrengthen* the Diſciples in the *Faith*, of theſe, becauſe they were *Natives*, they uſually ordained ſuch, as they found qualified for the Miniſtry, or, in Caſe they had no Proſpect of returning, they *deputed* others (as St. *Paul* left *Titus* in *Crete*) *to* (*i*) *ordain Elders in every City*.

And of what Uſe and Continuance they were.

THIS was the *Practice*, that the Apoſtles were obliged to, in the Infancy of the Church, and therefore we may ſuppoſe, that the abovementioned *Gifts* or *Offices* were only *temporary* Proviſions, and never deſigned for a conſtant Continuance; for, (*k*) *whether there be Prophecies* (ſays the ſame *Apoſtle*) *they ſhall fail*; *whether there be Tongues, they ſhall ceaſe*; *whether there be Knowledge, it ſhall vaniſh away*. The Church, as a *regular* Society, will, at all Times, ſtand in need of Perſons to *preſide* over it in the Offices of *Government*, and, as a *religious* Society, will have perpetual Occaſion for ſome to teach, and miniſter in its Worſhip and Ordinances: and therefore ſuch Gifts or Endowments as were to *ceaſe*, and expire in a *ſhort* Time, could never be a *ſtated* and ordinary Proviſion, but only ſuch an *occaſional* Help, as was requiſite to ſupply the preſent Exigence; for, if we look into the Churches, that were firſt regularly eſtabliſhed, we ſhall find, that they were erected upon a different *Plan*.

Thoſe, that obtained in particular Churches, not yet completely ſettled.

IN the Church of *Jeruſalem*, which was the firſt of this Kind, though, for ſome Time, after the *Deſcent* of the holy Ghoſt, the whole *Authority* of it remained in the Hands of the Apoſtles, yet it was not long before they ſolemnly ordained *Deacons*, not only to aſſiſt in the *Diſtribution* of the publick Charity, but in the *Diſpenſation* of the Word likewiſe, as appears in the Examples of *Stephen* and *Philip*; and, before their Departure from *Jeruſalem* to go upon the Propagation of the Goſpel, they conſtituted *James*, the Brother of our Lord, to be the ſupreme Officer, or (as he is univerſally called by the *earlieſt* Writers) the *Biſhop* thereof, about the ſame Time ordaining a College of *Preſbyters*, to be *aſſiſtant* to him in the Government of the Church. In the Church of *Antioch*, (*l*) *where the Diſciples were firſt called Chriſtians*, after ſome *extraordinary* Perſons, diſtinguiſhed by the Names of *Prophets* and *Teachers*, had converted a *great Number* of Gentiles, and were aſſiſted in confirming them in *the Faith by Barnabas, and Saul*, we find that *Saul*, who, before this, was called by Chriſt himſelf to be an *Apoſtle*, was, by the Command of the holy Ghoſt, ſet apart for *the Work of the Miniſtry*, and then, with his Character changing his Name into *Paul*, both he and *Barnabas* thenceforward had conſtantly the Title of *Apoſtles*; by which means, though a *regular* Miniſtry was not as yet eſtabliſhed at *Antioch*, yet there we find *three* diſtinct Orders of Men, *Apoſtles, Prophets, and Teachers*. In the Church of *Epheſus*, where St. *Paul* appointed *Timothy* Biſhop, we read (*m*) *of Elders, ſuch as laboured in the Word and Doctrine*, and *Deacons* we may preſume there were likewiſe, becauſe the Apoſtle preſcribes him ſuch particular Rules concerning the *Choice* of them and their *Ordination*; nor can we imagine, but that there was the like *Order* in *Crete*, where *Titus* was conſtituted Biſhop, though the Purpoſe of St. *Paul*'s leaving him there is only ſaid to be, (*n*) *that he might ſet in order the Things that were wanting, and ordain Elders in every City*.

THE Truth is, while Chriſtianity was in its *Infancy*, we are not to wonder, that we find its *eccleſiaſtical* Affairs not reduced to a proper *Settlement*; that, in ſome Churches, at firſt, we meet with none, but ſuch *extraordinary* Perſons, as itinerant *Teachers, Prophets, and Evangeliſts*; in others, *Preſbyters* only, without Biſhops; and in others, *Biſhops*, with their *Deacons*, but without any *Elders*; "becauſe, while "the Preaching of the Goſpel was new "(as *Epiphanius* gives the Reaſon) all "Things could not be ſettled by the Apo-"ſtles at once—where none were found "worthy to be Prieſts, they were con-"tent with a Biſhop, having his Deacons "for Miniſtrations—but the Church was "not as yet completed in its Offices, ſince "nothing is perfect at firſt; but, in Pro-"ceſs of Time, all that was needful was "eſtabliſhed

(*i*) Tit. i. 5. (*k*) 1 Cor. xiii. 8. (*l*) Acts xi. 26. (*m*) 1 Tim. v. 17. (*n*) Tit. i. 5.

"eſtabliſhed and fixed;" and from his Teſtimony we may infer, that in Churches, which were perfectly ſettled (as the primitive Church of *Jeruſalem* was) there were the three Orders, of *Biſhops, Prieſts, and Deacons*, and that, when theſe Officers were once appointed, all Power of Rule, Order, and Miniſtry did thenceforward belong to them, excluſive of all others.

In thoſe that were complete ly ſettled, there were three Orders.

THAT (*o*) the Apoſtles, while they lived, and were in the Capacity of *Biſhops* in the Church, had (*p*) power over *Deacons*, and gave Miſſion to *Preſbyters*; and that (*q*) the Biſhops, conſtituted by them, had authority to *cenſure offending Elders*; (*r*) to *examine* and approve of *Deacons*, and (*s*) to admit both by the Impoſition of Hands, which always accompanied their Ordination, are Truths, as plain and evident as any that are recorded in the Word of God; the only remaining Queſtion is, in whom the *ſupreme* or governing Power of the Church was lodged, or, in other Words, whether Biſhops were a *diſtinct* Order from Preſbyters, and properly had a Juriſdiction over them? And, for the Reſolution of this, we muſt look back again to the Churches, which at firſt were regularly ſettled.

But the Biſhop's Authority proved to be ſupreme *both from* Scripture,

IN the Church of *Jeruſalem* the firſt Time that we find St. *James* mentioned with any Character of Diſtinction, is, when (*t*) St. *Peter* requires, that Notice of his miraculous Delivery might be communicated to him, as a Man of the greateſt Eminence in it. After that, (*u*) when an *Appeal* from *Antioch*, concerning the Matter of *Circumciſion*, was made to the *Apoſtles* and *Elders* at *Jeruſalem*, and much (*x*) *Diſputation* thereupon enſued, *James* ſums up the whole, and then gives his Determination, (*y*) *wherefore my Sentence is, that we trouble not them, who from among the Gentiles are turned to God*; and ſince his Sentence put an End to the Controverſy, this plainly ſhews what Authority and Pre-eminence he had in that Place: and, in like Manner, when (*z*) *Paul* and his Company returned to *Jeruſalem, and the Brethren received him gladly, the next Day he went in with them unto James*, with whom all the *Elders were then preſent*; but it will be difficult to aſſign a Reaſon, why *Paul* ſhould *go in to James* more eſpecially, or why *all the Elders ſhould be preſent* with him, unleſs we ſuppoſe him a Perſon of the greateſt Note and Figure in the Church, to whom all theſe *Elders* were ſubordinate.

IN the Church of *Epheſus*, (according to St. *Paul*'s Epiſtles,) *Timothy* was inveſted with Authority, not only over the *Laity*, (*a*) *to command and teach them*; (*b*) to make Rules for the orderly Celebration of *divine Worſhip*; (*c*) to receive Widows into the Churches Service, or to reject them; (*d*) to oblige Women to be *modeſt* in their apparel, and *ſilent* in publick Aſſemblies; but over the *Clergy* likewiſe; (*e*) *to commit the Doctrine of Chriſt to faithful Men*; (*f*) to take Care that a ſuitable Maintenance ſhould be provided for them; (*g*) to *receive an Accuſation againſt them*, and, if they were guilty, to cenſure, and *put them to Shame*; (*h*) to enquire into the Qualifications of *Biſhops* and *Deacons*; and to ordain them by the Impoſition *of his Hands*, which he was to do with great Caution, for Fear (*i*) *of being Partaker of other Mens Sins.*

In the Church of *Crete*, *Titus*, we find, was impowered to *teach* all Degrees of Men, and (*k*) to *exhort*, and *rebuke with Authority*; to take Cognizance of *Hereticks*, and (*l*) to *reject* from his own, and the Church's Communion ſuch, as did not *repent upon the ſecond Admonition*; (*m*) to *ſet in order whatever* St. *Paul* had left unfiniſhed, or wanting Reformation; and, laſtly, (*n*) *to ordain* thoſe, whom he himſelf ſhould approve to be *Biſhops and Elders*: Which were plainly Powers, that the *Preſbyters*, then in *Crete*, were not poſſeſſed of, and conſequently, a Demonſtration of the Superiority, which *Titus*, in that Iſland and Dioceſe, had above all other Miniſters: And (to mention no more) in the *ſeven* Churches of the *Proconſular Aſia* we find the like Dignity and Pre-eminence conferr'd upon (*o*) *ſeven* Perſons, to whom our Lord ſends his Epiſtles directed to the *ſeven Angels of* theſe Churches, whom he calls *the ſeven Stars in his right Hand.* He calls them *Angels*, to ſhew that they were Perſons of Office and Eminence, and the rightful Succeſſors of the Apoſtles, who, in the ſame Book of *Revelation*, are ſtiled (*p*) *twelve Angels*,

(*o*) *Comber* on Ordination. (*p*) Acts vi. 6. and xv. 22. (*q*) 1 Tim. v. 1. (*r*) iii. 8. (*s*) v. 22. (*t*) Acts xii. 17. (*u*) Acts xv. (*x*) Ver. 7. (*y*) Ver. 19. (*z*) Acts xxi. 17, 18. (*a*) 1 Tim. iv. 11. (*b*) ii. 1. (*c*) v. 4, &c. (*d*) ii. 11, 12. (*e*) 2 Tim. ii. 2. (*f*) 1 Tim. v. 17. (*g*) v. 19, 20. (*h*) iii. 1, &c. (*i*) v. 22. (*k*) Tit. ii. 15. (*l*) iii. 10. (*m*) i. 5. (*n*) Ver. 5. (*o*) Rev. i. 16, 20. (*p*) Rev. xxi. 12, 14.

Angels, as *Apoſtles* and *Angels* indeed are almoſt *ſynonymous* Terms; he reſembles them to *Stars*, which are a very proper *Emblem* of ſuch, as occupied the Place and Employment of the Apoſtles, whom, in his Goſpel, he calls (*p*) *the Light of the World*; and, to ſhew the Authority, he had given them in their ſeveral Stations, he commends the *Angel of Epheſus*, *for* (*q*) *having tried*, or judicially convicted, *thoſe, that pretended to be Apoſtles, and were not, and* reproves the *Angel of Pergamos*, for having in his Church thoſe, (*r*) *that held the Doctrine of Balaam, and of the Nicolaitans*, when he had a Power of ejecting them, or otherwiſe he would not have been culpable upon that Account.

And Church Hiſtory.

THUS it appears, from the Writings of the *New Teſtament*, that, in ſeveral Churches, there were *ſingle* Perſons, ordained by the Apoſtles, and inveſted with ſupreme Authority, to rule and preſide in Matters *eccleſiaſtical*; and if we ſhould now deſcend to the Ages, next ſucceeding the Apoſtles, and examine the Writings of thoſe, who were their *immediate* Scholars and Diſciples, and ſo continue our Search downwards, we ſhould meet with abundant Teſtimonies of a conſtant *Succeſſion* of this *ſuperior* Order, even from the Apoſtles, to whom our Saviour at firſt delivered it: But for this there is no Occaſion. From the Hiſtory of the Church we are informed, that (*s*) the Apoſtles themſelves ordained *Dionyſius* the *Areopagite* Biſhop of *Athens*, *Caius* of *Theſſalonica*, *Archippus* of *Coloſs*, *Oneſimus* of *Epheſus*, *Antipas* of *Pergamus*, *Eupaphroditus* of *Philippi*, *Eraſtus* of *Macedonia*, *Trophimus* of *Arles*, *Jaſon* of *Tarſus*, *Oneſiphorus* of *Colophon*, and *Paul the Proconſul* of *Narbona*, with many more. As therefore (*t*) we are now able to produce the *Catalogue* of thoſe ſeveral *Prelates*, who have ſat in the Sees of this Kingdom ſince the Time of the *Reformation*; ſo the Writers, who lived at ſome Diſtance from the firſt Beginning of Chriſtianity, do very frequently give us the whole *Series* of thoſe Biſhops, who had preſided in the ſeveral Churches from the very Times of the Apoſtles; and when, in peruſing this, we find, that the Churches founded by the Apoſtles, though never ſo *remote* from one another, did all agree in the *ſame Form* of eccleſiaſtical Government, inſomuch that we can read of no one, but what was ruled by one ſingle Biſhop; we cannot but perſuade ourſelves, that a Matter of this Moment could not have obtained ſo *univerſally*, unleſs all Churches had, together with the *ſame Faith*, received alſo the *ſame Form* of Government from the Apoſtles. Upon the whole then it ſeems to be evident, that, as there was all along, under ſeveral different *Diſpenſations*, a diſtinct Order of Men appointed to officiate in religious Matters, ſo, in the Infancy of the Chriſtian Church, there was a great Variety of *extraordinary* Perſons, whoſe ſingular Gifts were of great Service in the Propagation, and Advancement of the Goſpel; that, in many Places, where theſe Perſons came, they not only made *great Numbers* of Converts, but performed likewiſe the Buſineſs of publick Worſhip and Inſtruction, until a proper *Miniſtry* could be ſettled; that, in theſe Places, at this Time, the Apoſtles reſerved to themſelves the Authority of *Government*, which, when preſent, they executed in Perſon, but, in their Abſence, by *Letters*, or ſpecial *Meſſengers*; that the Perſons, they ſubſtituted in their Room, where they had an Opportunity of doing it, were *Biſhops*, with their *Preſbyters*, and *Deacons*, the *ſtanding* Orders of the Church, on whom both the Authority of Government, and all the Offices of the Miniſtry did devolve; and that, of theſe Orders, the *ſupreme* Power and Authority was lodged in the Biſhop, who was ordained by the Apoſtles themſelves, and by them raiſed to a *Superiority*, in Matters eccleſiaſtical, above other *Miniſters*, as well as *common* Chriſtians, and therefore, (*u*) as, in the *Jewiſh* Church, the *High Prieſt* was above the *Prieſts* and *Levites*; as, in the Infancy of the Chriſtian Church, Chriſt was above the *Apoſtles*, and the ſeventy *Diſciples*; and as, while the Apoſtles lived, they were above the other eccleſiaſtical Officers; ſo, ever after their Death, Biſhops had, and to the End of the World ought to have a *permanent* Authority over *Prieſts* and *Deacons*. Whether this Authority be by *divine Right* or no, it is trifling to diſpute; for, ſince the Apoſtles in planting and eſtabliſhing the Church, were divinely inſpired; ſince they did nothing, but what they were taught to

(*p*) Matt. v. 14. (*q*) Rev. ii. 2. (*r*) Ver. 14, 15. (*s*) Bp. *Taylor* of Epiſcopacy Sect. 18. (*t*) Bp. *Smalridge*'s Ser. (*u*) Ibid.

do by Chriſt; ſince Chriſt did nothing, but what he was taught by the Father; ſince he himſelf was God, and what was done by him was done by *divine Authority*, it comes to the ſame Thing, whether we aſſert *Epiſcopacy* to be of *divine Right*, or of *Apoſtolick Inſtitution*, and our Obligation to obſerve the Injunction of the Author to the *Hebrews* is ſtill the ſame; (*x*) *Obey them, that have the Rule over you, and ſubmit yourſelves, for they watch for your Souls, as they that muſt give an Account, that they may do it with Joy and not with Grief, for that is unprofitable for you.*

A Recapitulation *of the whole.*

THUS much for the Expoſition of the *ninth* Article, *the holy Catholick Church, the Communion of Saints*, wherein we profeſs to believe, that God has ſeparated from the reſt of the World, and incorporated into one Society a *viſible* Body of People, profeſſing the pure Religion of *Jeſus Chriſt*, and united to him, as their common *Head*, and to one another, as *Fellow-Members* of the ſame *myſtical* Body; that theſe People, how widely ſoever diſperſed over the Face of the Earth, and diſtributed into never ſo many *particular Congregations*, conſtitute but *one Catholick* Church by the Will and Promiſe of its *Founder* deſigned to be *univerſal*, both in *Extent* and *Duration*; and that theſe ſeveral Congregations, embracing the ſame Faith, and retaining the ſame Love and Charity for one another, are in Communion with each Perſon in the ever *bleſſed Trinity*, with the holy Angels above, and with the whole *Fraternity* of Saints, whether thoſe, that are *militant* here on Earth, or thoſe that are gone before, and are now *triumphant* in Heaven: and the proper Reſult of all this ſhould be——our *Thankfulneſs* to God for the Honour and Privilege of our *Church-Membership*, in that (*y*) *he hath made us meet to be Partakers of the Inheritance with the Saints in Light*; our conſtant *Endeavours* after *Holineſs*, for (*z*) *if we ſay, that we have Fellowſhip with God, and walk in Darkneſs, we lie, and do not the Truth*; our *Zeal* for the Propagation of the Goſpel, and, as far as in us lies, to make the *Pale* of Chriſt's Church as extenſive as the *Limits* of the Univerſe; our *Preſervation* of its *Unity*, both in Doctrine and Worſhip, (*a*) *by following Peace and Amity with them, that call on the Lord out of a pure Heart*; or *maintaining* its Communion, by daily frequenting the publick Service of the Church, whereunto we belong; and our *Readineſs* to communicate *to the Neceſſity of Saints*, and, (*b*) *as we have Opportunity, to do good unto all Men, eſpecially unto them, who are of the Houſhold of Faith.*

(*x*) Heb. xiii. 17. (*y*) Col. i. 12. (*z*) 1 John i. 6. (*a*) 2 Tim. ii. 22. (*b*) Gal. vi. 10.

CHAP.

CHAP. X.

ARTICLE X.

* The Forgiveneſs of Sins.

The EXPOSITION.

Forgiveneſs *of* Sins *a Doctrine purely* Chriſtian.

THE ſecond *Privilege*, that we are made Partakers of by being incorporated into Chriſt's Church, is the *Forgiveneſs of Sins*; and a Privilege it is, which we may, in a great Meaſure, account *peculiar* to the *Chriſtian* Religion. A great Part of the *Heathen* World indeed, from the Bounty of divine Providence, (*a*) *in giving them Rain from Heaven, and fruitful Seaſons, filling their Hearts with Food and Gladneſs*, had conceived right *Notions* of his Goodneſs, and ſome general *Hopes* of his Mercy and Forgiveneſs, and, from the prevailing Cuſtom of preſenting Sacrifices and other Oblations to him, they expreſſed their *Conſciouſneſs* of Guilt, their *Dread* of Puniſhment, and their Deſire of appeaſing, and making Satisfaction to the *offended Deity*: But in all this they did but *conjecture* and preſume: They had no Manner of Aſſurance, that all their Services of this Kind would procure the Atonement and Expiation of their Sin. The *Jewiſh* Nation had a great Variety of Victims and Offerings appointed by God himſelf for the Atonement of *leſſer* Tranſgreſſions, ſuch as proceeded from Ignorance, and Inadvertency, but the *penitential Words* of holy *David* give us ſome Reaſon to doubt, whether they were available for the Pardon of *greater* and more enormous Offences: (*b*) *Thou deſireſt no Sacrifice, elſe would I give it thee, but thou delighteſt not in Burnt-Offerings. The Sacrifice of God is a troubled Spirit*, thereby intimating, that as the Law had made no Proviſion for the Expiation of the Crimes of *Murder* and *Adultery* which lay heavy upon his Conſcience, he would preſent unto the Almighty *a broken Heart, and a contrite Spirit*, hoping that by theſe he might find Acceptance, and an Abſolution from his Guilt: Or if we ſuppoſe with ſome, that theſe † *legal* Offerings extended

(*a*) Acts xiv. 17. (*b*) Pſ. li. 16, 17.

* This *Article*, in the moſt ancient Creeds, at leaſt in the Creeds of many Churches, was not immediately after the *holy Catholick Church*, in the Manner it is now, as the Author *of the Hiſtory of the Apoſtles Creed* has obſerved; but then, his Conjecture concerning the *Time* of its *Reception* into the Creed, *viz.* that it was not before the Days of St. *Cyprian*, and upon the Account of ſome *Hereticks*, eſpecially the *Novatians*, who denied the *Church* had Power to remit Sins committed after *Baptiſm*, is hardly to be admitted. For, beſides that Remiſſion of Sins was a Doctrine, which our Saviour appointed to be *preached to all Nations in his Name*; which, accordingly, the Apoſtles made the conſtant Subject of their *catechetical* Diſcourſes; which St. *Paul*, in particular, calls one of the *Principles, and Fundamentals* of *the Doctrine of Chriſt*, Heb. vi. 1. It can hardly be ſuppoſed, but that it was profeſſed all along by the *Catechumens* before their Baptiſm, and, from the firſt Beginning of Chriſtianity, inſerted in the Creed. For had it been inſerted in Oppoſition to the *Novatian* Hereſy, it is reaſonable to think, that either Mention would have been made of *Sins committed after Baptiſm*, or ſome other Phraſe of the like Significance, whereas, in all ancient Creeds, the Article is expreſſed either by *Remiſſion of Sins* in general, or by *one Baptiſm for Repentance*, or by *one Baptiſm for Remiſſion of Sins*; the former of which does not at all contradict the *Novatian* Doctrine, and the latter may ſeem to favour it. The Crit. Hiſt. and *Grabe*'s Notes upon Bp. *Bull*'s Judgment of the Cath. Church.

† That the Sacrifices under the *Law*, upon the Repentance of the Offenders, did properly atone for all Manner of Sins and Tranſgreſſions, is evident from that noted Paſſage in Lev. xvii. 20, &c. Where we find, that the *Goat*, which was to be an Offering for Sin, was thus treated——*Aaron* was to confeſs over its Head all the *Iniquities* of the People, and *all their Tranſgreſſions in all their Sins, putting them upon the Head of the Goat, and ſo ſending him away, by the Hand of a fit Man, into the Wilderneſs, bearing upon him all their Iniquities*. Here we have a ſolemn Declaration of the *Univerſality* of the Forgiveneſs of Sins even under the Law, for the Goat was to expiate for *all their Iniquities, and all their Tranſgreſſions, in all their Sins*, which are Terms as comprehenſive as we can well imagine. Nor is it of any Weight to ſay, that great Offenders under the *Law*, ſuch as Adulterers, Murderers, Idolaters, &c. ſuffered *capital* Puniſhments in this Life, ſince the

extended to the *Remiſſion* of the moſt heinous Crimes, yet we muſt ſtill allow, that it was in Virtue of the Sacrifice (*c*) *of the Lamb of God, which was ſlain from the Foundation of the World*, and, as *ſomething of the Goſpel was mingled with the Law*, (as (*d*) one expreſſes it) that they received this Power and Efficacy.

THE Truth is, no Sin was ever forgiven, but in Virtue of this Satisfaction, nor was God ever reconciled to any Offender, but by the Intuition of this Propitiation; and yet the *general* Doctrine of the Remiſſion of Sins, upon the Account of that alone was never fully and clearly revealed, until the Publication of the Goſpel, which is therefore called by the Angel (*e*) *the good Tidings of great Joy to all People*; which *John* the *Baptiſt*, our Lord's Forerunner, was to publiſh (*f*) *in giving Knowledge of Salvation unto his People by the Remiſſion of Sins*; which our Lord himſelf foretold ſhould (*g*) *be preached and teſtified in his Name among all Nations*, which the Apoſtles made the Matter of their Invitation to ſuch, as they exhorted to become Chriſtians, (*h*) *repent and be converted, that your Sins may be blotted out*; and which St. *Peter* magnifies, as a *Privilege* exceeding thoſe of any other Diſpenſation; *(i) be it known unto you, that, through this Man, is preached unto you Forgiveneſs of Sins, and by him all, that believe, are juſtified from all Things, from which they could not be juſtified by the Law of Moſes:* And what thoſe Things are we come now to obſerve.

The Nature *and ſeveral* Kinds *of Sin.*

(*k*) *WHOSOEVER committeth Sin*, ſays St. *John*, *tranſgreſſeth the Law*, which he proves by this Definition, for *Sin is the Tranſgreſſion of the Law.* That the Right of Legiſlation does properly belong to God, as the great Creator and Governor of the World, no one can diſpute: That to our firſt Parents he gave Rules for the Conduct of their Lives, and one particular *Precept* for the Teſt of their Obedience, and that to all ſucceeding Generations he ſignified his Will requiring their Obſervance of it under various Diſpenſations, is plain from the whole Tenour of Scripture. The Violation of the divine Command in our firſt Progenitors is called *original Sin*, which does not ſo much conſiſt in our *Imitation of their Tranſgreſſion*, as (*l*) *in the natural* Depravity which we find in all the *Poſterity of Adam*, whereby we are far departed from *original Righteouſneſs*, and ſtrongly *inclined to* that which *is evil*, and, conſequently, under a manifeſt Defection from the pure Will of God. From this *original* Depravity of our Nature (as (*m*) *from a corrupt Tree* we muſt neceſſarily *expect corrupt Fruit)* do ſpontaneouſly ariſe all thoſe Tranſgreſſions of God's Laws, which we *perſonally* commit, either in Thought, Word, or Deed, and theſe are termed *actual Sins*. Now, foraſmuch as all God's Laws are delivered to us either in *negative*, or *affirmative* Precepts, whenever we venture upon the Perpetration of any Vice, that he forbids, we incur the *Sin of Commiſſion*; whenever we neglect to perform, or perform but negligently any Duty, that he enjoins, we fall under the Imputation of the *Sin of Omiſſion*; and theſe again, (*n*) according to the prevailing *Faculty* of the Soul, which appears to be moſt faulty in what we do, are diſtinguiſhed into Sins of *Ignorance, Infirmity, and Preſumption.* If the *Underſtanding* be chiefly in Default, ſo as not rightly to apprehend, or not duly to conſider the Nature of the Action we engage in, whether it be conſonant, or contrary to any divine Prohibition or Command; what we ſo do, if it happens to be *culpable*, is properly *a Sin of Ignorance.* If the main Fault be in the *Affections* which, by ſome ſudden *Paſſion* and *Perturbation* of Mind, ſuch as Fear, Anger, Deſire, and the like, *diſtract* the Thoughts, and *blind* and corrupt the Judgment, ſo as not to be able to perceive what is right, in this Caſe what we do amiſs, is termed a *Sin of Infirmity:* But if the Underſtanding is ſufficiently informed with Knowledge,

the ſame we ſee practiſed under the *Goſpel*, where Malefactors and Criminals are put to Death, notwithſtanding their Repentance, and the Pardon of their Sins through the *Blood* of Chriſt. Upon the whole therefore we may lay it down for a true Propoſition——that Forgiveneſs of all Sins, in Regard to their eternal Puniſhment, was revealed in the Law, namely by the Inſtitution of *bloody* Sacrifices; for theſe Sacrifices were offered, not only for the Expiation of *leſſer* Sins, but of thoſe, that were great and flagitious: But then this Expiation was upon the Account of Chriſt's Sacrifice *to be offered*, whereof they were *Types* and Repreſentations only. *Edwards*'s Body Vol. I.

(*c*) Rev. xiii. 8. (*d*) *Pearſon* on the Creed. (*e*) Luke ii. 10. (*f*) Luke i. 77. (*g*) Luke xxiv. 25. (*h*) Acts iii. 19. (*i*) Acts xiii. 38, 39. (*k*) 1 John iii. 4. (*l*) 9 Art. of the Church. (*m*) Luke vi. 43. (*n*) *Sanderſon*'s Ser. and *Newcomb*'s Cat. Lect.

Knowledge, and not much blinded or tranſported by any ſudden or violent Perturbation, the greateſt Blame muſt then reſt upon *the Will* obſtinately bent upon the Commiſſion of Wickedneſs, and the Tranſgreſſion, that ariſes from thence, though perhaps not altogether free from ſome *Mixture* of Ignorance and Infirmity, is nevertheleſs a *preſumptuous Sin*, which, by being often practiſed and repeated, grows, at length, into a *cuſtomary*, or *habitual Sin*, which is its greateſt and moſt deplorable Aggravation.

The Forgiveneſs of it, what.

Now theſe being the ſeveral Ways, wherein God could not but foreſee, that Man, as a *free Agent*, would offend againſt his Laws, in order to deter them from ſuch Provocation, he eſtabliſhed them with proper *Sanctions*, and as (*o*) he *is a God of purer Eyes than to behold Iniquity* without puniſhing it, made theſe Sanctions highly *penal*. In the Beginning of the World, and to the very *firſt* Man, Death is denounced as the juſt Penalty of his Sin: (*p*) *In the Day, thou eateſt thereof, thou ſhalt ſurely die.* Under the *Law* the Commination is, (*q*) *Curſed is every one* (as St. *Paul* repreſents the Paſſage in *Deuteronomy*) *that continueth not in all Things written in the Book of the Law to do them*; and under the *Goſpel* the Declarations are, that (*r*) *they, who commit ſuch Things*, as are deteſtable in the Sight of God, *are worthy of Death*; that (*s*) *no Whore-monger, or unclean Perſon, or covetous Man, who is an Idolater, hath any Inheritance in the Kingdom of Chriſt*; but that *Indignation* (*t*) *and Wrath, Tribulation and Anguiſh ſhall be* the Portion *of every Soul of Man, that doeth evil.* To ſuch *Penalties* is every one obnoxious, that tranſgreſſeth the Laws of God; and yet the royal Preacher has told us, that (*u*) *there is not a juſt Man upon Earth, that doeth good, and ſinneth not*, i. e. tranſgreſſeth not the Laws of God, is conſequently liable to the Puniſhment of eternal Death, nor can he be in any State of Salvation, until he hath obtained the Remiſſion of his Sin. It is with no ſmall *Elegancy* therefore that the Scripture calls our Treſpaſſes by the Name of *Debts*, and thoſe, that commit them, by that of *Debtors*; becauſe like *Debts*, properly ſo called, they oblige a Man to Payment, or in Caſe of Failure, to ſuffer condign Puniſhment: but as when the *Debt*, which the poor Man is not able to pay, by the Bounty and Generoſity of the *Creditor* is releaſed, becomes no longer due, but is intirely cancelled and forgot; ſo, with Alluſion hereunto, (*x*) *blotting out Tranſgreſſion*, (*y*) *covering and not imputing it*, (*z*) *taking away Iniquity, and hiding the Face from it, caſting* (*a*) *our Sins behind the Back*, and (*b*) *caſting them into the Depths of the Sea*, are Expreſſions, that every where occur in Scripture, to denote that gracious Act of *Forgiveneſs*, which frees the Sinner from the Imputation of *Guilt*, and from the Obligation of ſuffering ſuch *Puniſhment*, as the Commiſſion of his Sin had juſtly expoſed him to.

By whom *it is reunited, in what* Manner, *and for* what Motives.

By whoſe *Power* and Authority it is, that this Obligation is releaſed, we find God himſelf, by the Mouth of his Prophet, declaring; I, even *I am he, that blotteth out thy Tranſgreſſions, for mine own Sake, and will not remember thy Sins*; and yet the holy Scriptures are not wanting to aſcribe the ſame *Prerogative* to our bleſſed Saviour likewiſe, (*c*) *whom God hath exalted with his right Hand* (as the Apoſtle ſpeaks) *to be a Prince, and a Saviour, for to give Repentance to Iſrael, and Forgiveneſs of Sins*; and therefore to perceive what *diſtinct* Part it is, that each of theſe *divine* Perſons acts in this Affair, we muſt obſerve——(*d*) that the Laws, againſt which all Men offend, and are thereby obliged to Puniſhment, are ſtrictly and properly the Laws of God the *Father*, who, as he is the *firſt* and ſupreme Perſon in the *Godhead*, was always the firſt and the ſupreme in the divine *Dominion*; and as this Dominion conſiſts in a *legiſlative* and *executive* Power, the Father muſt be *ſupreme* in both, and, conſequently, not only the Laws muſt be peculiarly his, but the Right of *exacting* or *remitting* the Puniſhment, due for the Violation of them, muſt in a *ſpecial* Manner belong to him. Herein then is the *Part*, which God the Father acts in the Forgiveneſs of Sin, that, in the Goſpel he hath made a publick *Grant* of Pardon to all *penitent* Offenders, *through*

(*o*) Hab. i. 13. (*p*) Gen. ii. 17. (*q*) Deut. xxvii. 26. and Gal. iii. 10. (*r*) Rom. i. 32, (*s*) Eph v. 5. (*t*) Rom. ii. 8, 9. (*u*) Eccleſ. vii. 20. (*x*) Pſ. li. 1. (*y*) Pſ. xxxii. 1, 2. (*z*) Pſ. li. 9. (*a*) Iſai. xxxviii. 17. (*b*) Mich. vii. 19. (*c*) Acts v. 31. (*d*) *Scot's* Mediator.

(*e*) *the Redemption that is in Jeſus Chriſt, whom he hath ſet forth to be a Propitiation through Faith in his Blood, to declare his Righteouſneſs for the Remiſſion of Sins, that are paſſed, that he might be juſt, and the Juſtifier of them, that believe in Jeſus*; and the Part, which God the *Son* acts, was, at firſt, by the Merit of his Obedience to procure this *Charter* of Pardon from his Father, and in all ſucceeding Times, to make an actual Application of it to *particular* Sinners. So that the Father forgives us *virtually*, by that publick *Grant* of Mercy, which he has made to all penitent Offenders; and the Son forgives us *actually*, by that Authority, which he, and thoſe that act under him, have from the Father, to make *particular* Application of this *general Grant* to as many, as perform the *Conditions*, upon which it is ſuſpended.

Upon what Conditions,

FOR, in this Forgiveneſs we cannot but own that there ought to be ſome Reſtrictions and Limitations; (*f*) even as a *Prince*, who grants a Pardon to his *rebellious* Subjects, does out of his *free Grace* and Bounty (becauſe he is under no *Obligation* to pardon them) but ſtill he grants it upon theſe Conditions, *viz.* that they humbly acknowledge their *Crime*, give publick Teſtimony of their *Remorſe*, and readily return to their *Duty* and Allegiance again: and, in like Manner, though God's forgiving of Sinners be intirely *free* and gratuitous, yet it nevertheleſs requires ſomething to be done on our Part, and this is what the Scripture comprizes under the Terms of *Faith* and *Repentance*.

viz. Faith,

THE *original Motive* of our Forgiveneſs is the *eſſential Goodneſs* of God, in which Reſpect it is ſaid, that (*g*) *he commended his Love to us, in that, while we were yet Sinners, Chriſt*, by his Order and Appointment, *died for us*; but the *meritorious Cauſe* and Procurement of it is, the *Death* and *Paſſion* of our bleſſed Lord, which God was pleaſed to accept in full Compenſation for the Sins of Mankind, and is therefore ſaid (*h*) *to have been in Chriſt reconciling the World to himſelf, and not imputing their Treſpaſſes unto them.* The Truth is, ſince the Scripture every where declares, that (*i*) *there is no other Name under Heaven, given among Men, whereby we muſt be ſaved*, but only *the Name of Jeſus Chriſt of Nazareth*; That (*k*) *through his Name, whoſoever believeth in him, ſhall receive Remiſſion of his Sins*; that (*l*) *in him we have Boldneſs, and Acceſs with Confidence by the Faith of him*; that, as (*m*) *he ever liveth to make Interceſſion for us, he is able to ſave to the uttermoſt them, that come unto God by him*, and there (*n*) *having an High Prieſt, who is ſet on the right Hand of the Throne of the Majeſty in the Heavens*, we are exhorted to (*o*) *come boldly to the Throne of Grace, that we may obtain Mercy and Forgiveneſs in the Time of Need:* Since the Efficacy of our Saviour's Death and Interceſſion, I ſay, is thus repreſented in Scripture, there is no *coming to God* for a Sinner, no pleading his *general Grant* of Pardon, no expecting an Abſolution in Virtue of it (eſpecially ſince the Chriſtian Diſpenſation commenced) but through the Merits and Mediation of Jeſus Chriſt (*p*) *in whom we have Redemption through his Blood, even the Forgiveneſs of our Sins, according to the Riches of God's Grace:* and therefore one neceſſary Qualification in every one, that ſues to God for Pardon of his Sins, is a *firm Belief*, that what our Lord *did* and *ſuffered* for our Salvation (as it is recorded in the Hiſtory of his Life) is *infallibly* true; an *intire Dependance* on his Redeemer's Intereſt with his heavenly Father for his Acceptance; and a firm Reliance on his meritorious Sufferings, which alone have made his Sins *remiſſible*.

And Repentance, *both* publick *and* private,

THUS *Faith towards Chriſt* is the Sinner's only *Introduction* to God: And when this has once gained us an Acceſs, for the Remiſſion of our *leſſer* Sins, which are of daily *Incurſion*, and cannot be wholly avoided by the beſt of Livers, he hath allowed us *Prayer*, and conſtant Addreſs to the *Throne of Grace*; in which Senſe we are taught to ſay, *forgive us our Treſpaſſes, as we forgive them that treſpaſs againſt us:* And, (*q*) for our more *heinous* Offences he has allowed us the Expiation of a more *ſolemn* and particular Repentance, and that either *publick*, in Caſe of *ſcandalous* and flagrant Enormities, which deſerve *Excommunication* from the Body of Chriſt, or elſe *private*, between God and ourſelves, for ſuch Crimes, as

(*e*) Rom, iii. 24, &c. (*f*) *Edwards*'s Body Vol. I. (*g*) Rom. v. 8. (*h*) 2 Cor. v. 19.
(*i*) Acts iv. 12. (*k*) Acts x. 43. (*l*) Eph. iii. 12. (*m*) Heb. vii. 25. (*n*) viii. 1.
(*o*) iv. 16. (*p*) Eph. i. 7. (*q*) *Bingham*'s Ser.

as do not bring us under the publick *Diſcipline* and Cenſures of the Church. But then this *private* Repentance, though it paſſes between God and our own Souls only, ought nevertheleſs to be very *ſolemn* and *ſevere*, attended with a *ſorrowful* Senſe and Contrition for our Offences, an *humble* Acknowledgment and Confeſſion of them, *earneſt* Prayer and Supplication for their Forgiveneſs, an *utter* Abhorrence and Dereliction of them, an *actual* Obedience to all God's Commands for the future, and (to make ſome *Amends* for what we have done amiſs) *all* (*r*) *that Carefulneſs, and all that clearing of ourſelves*, that *Indignation*, that *Fear*, that *vehement Deſire*, that *Zeal*, that *Revenge*, of which (according to St. *Paul*'s Judgment) conſiſteth *that godly Sorrow, which worketh Repentance to Salvation, not to be repented of.* To this Purpoſe St. *James* adviſes thoſe, that had *ſinned* groſsly, not only (*s*) *to cleanſe their Hands, and purify their Hearts, but to be afflicted, and mourn, and weep, to humble themſelves in the Sight of God, and to let their Joy be turned into Heavineſs, and their Laughter into Mourning.* To this Purpoſe (*t*) the *primitive* Church always taught, "that Sins, committed wilfully, "after the Knowledge and Belief of the "*Truth*, were to be done away with "Labour and Sorrow; that they were not "immediately forgiven, upon a Man's "Beginning to repent, but after he had "afflicted his Soul, humbled himſelf deeply, and undergone a multitude of Trou"bles;" and to this Purpoſe we find all the Saints, whoever fell into any notorious Crimes, very ſevere in their Humiliation, and earneſtly deſiring, that God would give them their Puniſhment in this World, (*u*) *that their Spirit might be ſaved in the Day of the Lord Jeſus.*

Which laſt ought to be very ſevere,

And is available to the Forgiveneſs of Sins,

THIS is the *Method*, wherein the *penitent* Sinner is to proceed; and if he proceeds herein with Care and Circumſpection, there is no Manner of Doubt, but that in due Time the Promiſe of God will be verified in him, (*x*) *let the wicked forſake his Way, and the unrighteous Man his Thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have Mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon*; for he (*y*) *keepeth Mercy for thouſands, forgiving Iniquity, and Tranſgreſſion, and Sin.* When our bleſſed Saviour tells us, that, (*z*) *except we repent, we ſhall* inevitably *periſh*, under this ſevere Threat there is couched this gracious Promiſe, that if we do repent, we certainly ſhall not periſh; and when St. *Paul* (*a*) gives the *Corinthians* a *Catalogue* of ſome grievous Sinners, who, while they continued ſuch, could never think of *inheriting the Kingdom of Heaven*, that even theſe, if they relinquiſhed their Sins, and, through the Merits of Chriſt, applied themſelves to the Mercies of God for Forgiveneſs, had no Occaſion to deſpair, he immediately ſubjoins, (*b*) *and ſuch were ſome of you, but ye are waſhed, but ye are ſanctified, but ye are juſtified, in the Name of the Lord Jeſus, and by the Spirit of our God.*

Even the moſt heinous;

IT is reaſonable therefore to ſuppoſe, that the Inſtances of *David*'s Murder and Adultery, of *Solomon*'s Idolatry, of *Paul*'s perſecuting the Church, and of *Peter*'s denying his Maſter, all forgiven upon ſincere Repentance, are left upon Record, to encourage us, even after the moſt heinous Offences, to return to God, and never to reckon our Condition deſperate. If ever Men had Reaſon to deſpair of Pardon, it muſt certainly be thoſe, that embrewed their Hands in the moſt innocent Blood of Chriſt; and yet, when St. *Peter*'s Sermon (*c*) *had pricked them to the Heart*, ſo that they enquired of him, what they were to do in order *to be ſaved*, he preſently preſcribed them this Method; *repent, and be baptized every one of you in the Name of Jeſus Chriſt for the Remiſſion of Sins.* The ſame Advice he gave (*d*) to *Simon Magus*, though he *perceived him to be in the Gall of Bitterneſs, and in the Bond of Iniquity*, and ſome Encouragement withall, that thereupon he might peradventure meet with *Forgiveneſs*. St. *James* tells us, that (*e*) *if any one err from the Faith, and one convert him, he, that converteth a Sinner from the Error of his Way, ſhall ſave a Soul from Death, and ſhall hide a Multitude of Sins.* St. *Paul* admoniſhes the *Galatians*, (*f*) *that, when any Man was overtaken in a Fault, they, who are ſpiritual, ſhould reſtore ſuch an one in the Spirit of Meekneſs, conſidering themſelves leſt they alſo be tempted*; even as himſelf

(*r*) 2 Cor. vii. 11. (*s*) James iv. 8, &c. (*t*) *Clarke's* Eſſay upon Repentance. (*u*) 1 Cor. v. 5.
(*x*) Iſ. lv. 7. (*y*) Exod. xxxiv. 7. (*z*) Luke xiii. 3. (*a*) 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10. (*b*) Ver. 11.
(*c*) Acts ii. 37, 38. (*d*) Acts viii. 22, 23. (*e*) James v. 20. (*f*) Gal. vi. 1.

ſelf treated the *inceſtuous* Perſon among the *Corinthians*, though he had been guilty of ſuch *a Sin, (g) as was not ſo much as named among the Heathens*; for, when the *Puniſhment*, which had been inflicted upon him, had proved ſufficient to reduce him to a Senſe of his Tranſgreſſion, he orders them (*b*) *to receive* him again into their Communion, and to *comfort him*, for which he gives a Reaſon taken from the common *Principles* of Pity and Humanity, *leſt he ſhould be ſwallowed up by overmuch Sorrow.*

Wherein God's Pardon is full *and* abſolute.

THUS it appears from the divine Nature and Promiſes, as well as from the Doctrine and Practice of the Apoſtles, that the greateſt Sins after *Baptiſm*, and the moſt enormous Sinners that we read of, upon their Repentance, were not excluded from the Mercy of God; and when he once forgives, his Pardon is full and abſolute. That very Moment (*i*) he *lays aſide* all his Wrath, *cancels* his former Diſpleaſure, *blots out* our Ingratitude, *forgets* our Offences, and *remembers* our Sins no more: Whatever our Tranſgreſſions have been, he *retains no* ſecret Grudge, *upbraids* us not with our paſt Follies, *repents* not of his Eaſineſs to be reconciled, *revokes* not arbitrarily his Kindneſs, *finds out no* ſubtle Evaſions to defer it, nor *clogs it* with any unreaſonable Conditions, but paſſes, at once, an *Act of Oblivion* upon every Thing, we have done amiſs, from which he will never depart, unleſs we retract our Repentance, and reaſſume the Cauſe of the Quarrel, the only Thing, that can reverſe our Pardon. It is no uncommon Thing among Men to *ſuppreſs* their Reſentment, merely to *perpetuate* it, and to ſeem to forgive an Injury, only till they have a ſecure Opportunity of a full Revenge: But (*k*) *I am God and not Man*, ſays the Almighty of himſelf, his Mercies are like the *great Mountains*, ſtable and firm. Thoſe, that repent, he pardons; and thoſe, whom he pardons, he loves; and thoſe, whom he loves, he will truſt and treat as Friends, with the greateſt Security and Confidence, for all (*l*) *his Gifts*, all his Acts of Grace *are without Repentance.*

The Means of conveying *it, viz.* Baptiſm,

Now the two great *Ordinances*, one relating to our *Initiation*, and the other to our *Continuation* in the Chriſtian Church, whereby this Act of *Forgiveneſs* is conveyed and applied unto us, are the Sacraments of *Baptiſm*, and the *Lord's Supper*: That *Baptiſm*, by the divine Appointment, is available to the Remiſſion of all our Sins, is manifeſt from the *Commiſſion*, which our Saviour gave his Diſciples; (*m*) *Go into the World, and preach the Goſpel to every Creature, he, that believeth, and is baptized, ſhall be ſaved*; from (*n*) St. *Peter*'s Exhortation to the Converts in the Day of Pentecoſt, and from the Words of *Ananias* to St. *Paul, and* (*o*) *now, why tarrieſt thou, ariſe, and be baptized, and waſh away thy Sins*; for which Reaſon we find St. *Auſtin*, in his Expoſition of this *Article* of the Creed, aſſerting that (*p*) *at Baptiſm all our Sins are forgiven, whether original, or actual*, and ſeveral other Fathers giving it ſuch glorious Titles, as theſe——*The Key of the Kingdom of Heaven, (q) the Diſſolution of Death, a Salvation unto eternal Life, a taking away of Guilt, and, conſequently, of Puniſhment, a Purgation from the Filth of the old and impure Leaven, a Participation of Adoption and Grace*, even as St. *Paul* calls it (*r*) *the waſhing of Regeneration, by which we are ſaved.* By all which, we muſt not imagine, that they apprehended *Baptiſm*, in itſelf, without any Regard to the Qualification of its Subject, ſufficient for all theſe Purpoſes, but their Meaning was, that whoſoever was *evangelically* prepared for that Ordinance by a ſincere Repentance, and unfeigned Faith, to him, and him alone, was Baptiſm efficacious to the *waſhing away* of all his Crimes and Tranſgreſſions, and therefore *Origen*'s Exhortation to the *Catechumens* of his Time is worthy our Obſervation. (*s*) *Let me beſeech you*, ſays he, *not without Caution and diligent Circumſpection to come to Baptiſm, but firſt of all bring forth Fruits meet for Repentance: Spend ſome Time in a good Converſation: Keep yourſelves clean from all Filthineſs and Vice: And then your Sins ſhall be forgiven, when ye yourſelves begin to contemn them.*

And the Lord's Supper *with proper* Qualifications;

UPON theſe *Conditions* are all our Sins forgiven in *Baptiſm*: But, if there were only one general Pardon offered to Sinners in that Ordinance, this would be but of ſlender Comfort to thoſe, who feel their *Infirmities*, and the *Sins, that do ſo eaſily beſet*

(*g*) 1 Cor. v. 1. (*b*) 2 Cor. ii. 7. (*i*) *Goodman's* Penitent pardoned. (*k*) Hoſea xi. 9.
(*l*) Rom. xi. 29. (*m*) Mark xvi. 15, 16. (*n*) Acts ii. 38. (*o*) Acts xxii. 16.
(*p*) *Enchir.* ad Laurent. C. 64. (*q*) Crit. Hiſt. of the Creed. (*r*) Tit. iii. 5. (*s*) Hom. 21. in Lucam.

beſet them, ſo apt to return upon them. The Truth is, while we are in this Life, encompaſſed *with Fleſh*, that *luſteth againſt the Spirit*; while the *Allurements* of the World, the *Stratagems* of Satan, and the *Corruptions* of our Nature are ſo apt to betray us, we are always ſubject to offend, and therefore it was that our gracious Saviour inſtituted that other *Sacrament* to be of perpetual Uſe in the Chriſtian Church, whereby we are admitted to renew the *Covenant* of Grace, when violated, and to receive the Remiſſion of our Sins, when incurred, by a Participation of the *Body and Blood of Chriſt*, and all the Expiation, and Atonement, that attend them. For this Reaſon we find both ancient and modern Writers ſtiling this Sacrament a *Treaſure of Bleſſings, a divine Repaſt, an heavenly Banquet, the Food and Nouriſhment of our Souls, the Inſtrument of Reconciliation, the Seal of the Covenant renewed, and a Preſervative from Temptations for the future, wherewith we are guarded, as with a Shield, and wherein we are ſecured, as in an impregnable Fortreſs, againſt the fierceſt Darts of the Enemy*: But by all this, we muſt not ſuppoſe, they ever imagined, that the Sacrament of the *Lord's Supper* would, of itſelf, without any Regard had to the Qualifications of the *Recipient*, work all theſe glorious Effects; but only, that, when a Man comes with an humble Senſe of his own *Unworthineſs*, and an utter Deteſtation of his Sins, with hearty *Contrition* for them, and firm *Reſolutions* to forſake them, to him, and him alone, theſe *Pledges* of divine Love are effectual to the Abſolution of his paſt Offences, and his Reſtoration to the Favour and Friendſhip of God; for which Reaſon the Exhortation of our Church, before the Celebration of this Ordinance, is, at all Times, very ſuitable and pertinent, *viz. That we ſhould conſider the Dignity of that holy Myſtery, and the great Peril of the unworthy receiving thereof, and to ſearch and examine our Conſciences, that we may come holy and clean to ſuch an heavenly Feaſt, in the Marriage Garment, required of God in the holy Scriptures, and be received as worthy Partakers of that holy Table.*

And the Place from whence it is conveyed.

We have but one Obſervation more in Relation to this Doctrine of *Forgiveneſs of Sins*, and that is this——that, although this Article in the Creed has, at preſent, no neceſſary *Connection* with that of the *holy Catholick Church*, yet, in ſome ancient *Forms* of Confeſſion, it ran thus—*I believe Remiſſion of Sins, and everlaſting Life, by the Church*; which plainly implies, that the Diſpenſation of theſe great Privileges was originally committed to the Church, and to thoſe that bore Office therein. By *inſtilling* Faith and Repentance, which are Goſpel-Graces and diſpoſe us for the Remiſſion of our Sins; by *inſtructing* us in the Nature and Terms of this Remiſſion, and what Qualifications are requiſite for our Reception of it; by daily *Exhortations*, and Importunities, recommending its State, and intreating us to comply with the Terms and Conditions of it; by *earneſt Prayer*, and Application to the Throne of Grace, drawing it down from thence, by the *Adminiſtration* of the Sacraments, appointed for that Purpoſe, diſpenſing it, and by the *Authority* of that Abſolution, which Chriſt himſelf inſtituted pronouncing it; by theſe, all theſe Methods, and Miniſtries, is the Church, and the *Stewards of her Myſteries* converſant about *the Forgiveneſs of Sins*; and from hence it is no hard Matter to collect, in what a miſerable Condition they muſt needs be, who either withdraw themſelves from the Church's *Communion*, or for their Enormities, are excluded from it; who withhold their Children from partaking of one of its Sacraments, and incapacitate themſelves from receiving the other, if there be any Truth in that known Saying of (*t*) St. *Cyprian, that Man cannot have God for his Father, who has not the Church for his Mother.*

The OBJECTION.

" But, if the *Forgiveneſs* of Sins " be a *Privilege* ſo peculiar to the " *Church*, and ſo unknown to the World " before the *Revelation* of the Goſpel, by " what *Means* was it attained in *preceding* " Ages, and how did the *Patriarchs* of " old, who were Sinners, no doubt, as " well as we, and yet are to (*u*) *ſit down* " *with Abraham, and Iſaac, and Jacob* " *in the Kingdom of Heaven*, compound-

(*t*) de Unit. Eccl. (*u*) Matt. viii. 11.

" ed the Matter of their Tranſgreſſions " with God? They certainly never heard " of the Name of Chriſt, and therefore, " excluſive of his Merits, their Repentance " *alone* muſt have been of ſufficient Effi- " cacy to appeaſe the Wrath of God, and to " make an Atonement for their Sins, which " is all that the boaſted Forgiveneſs under " the Goſpel can imply. As the Goſpel " indeed ſtates the Matter, ſome Sins are " ſo *ſmall* and *inconſiderable*, as not to *re-* " *quire* any Forgiveneſs, others ſo *heinous* " and *mortal* as not to be *capable* of any, " and of thoſe, which are of a *pardonable* " Size, the Remiſſion is oftentimes ſo du- " bious and uncertain, that the *penitent* can- " not aſſure his Heart, that he has obtain- " ed that perfect *Abſolution* which is ſo " much talked of, becauſe he finds " himſelf under (what he reckons the " *Puniſhment* of his Sins) *temporal* Cala- " mities, and *providential* Afflictions, un- " der *Apprehenſions* of God's Indignation " ſtill reſting upon him, at every Remem- " brance of his former Guilt; under an " *Inſufficiency* of Grace to cleanſe him " thoroughly from the *Remains* of his ſin- " ful *Corruptions*; and under a *Liableneſs* " to freſh Temptations, and ſuch powerful " Inſtigations of Satan, as rob him of all " Peace and Self-Enjoyment; ſo that his " Condition is never the better, never the " eaſier, never the happier, than that of " thoſe, who ſpend their Lives in Mirth " and Jollity, without ever once conſider- " ing the *Error of their Ways.*"

Anſwered, by ſhewing that Repentance alone *is not effectual to Forgiveneſs.*

THE Duty of rational *Creatures*, who are capable of diſcerning between Good and Evil, is to obey, at all Times, the Commands of God, and in no Caſe wilfully to tranſgreſs them; but when by Sin they do tranſgreſs them, they thereupon become liable to the *Penalty* of the Law, and ſubject to divine Diſpleaſure. In theſe Circumſtances Sorrow and Repentance for what they have done amiſs, and Reſolutions of doing better for the future, ſeem to be the *natural* Means and the only Expedient, they can have Recourſe to; but that theſe, in themſelves, are not ſufficient to abſolve from Guilt, and to effect a Reconciliation with their offended God, is evident from the ſeveral Ways of Pacification and Atonement, which all People, in every Part of the World, were known to obſerve and practiſe. (x) As God is the *Governor* of the Univerſe, it ſeems no more reconcileable to his *Juſtice*, or conſiſtent with the *Authority* he is to maintain, to pardon all Offenders upon Repentance, than it is conſiſtent with the Ends of *Government* among Men, to accept of the Criminal's Contrition, as a full Satisfaction to the Law, and to remit the Penalty, to which he has made himſelf obnoxious. By Repentance indeed, and better Obedience after Tranſgreſſion, there may be an *Hope* of Pardon, founded upon our *natural* Knowledge of God's *eſſential* Attributes of Goodneſs and Compaſſion; but, becauſe future Obedience is the doing no more, than what was our Duty to do, and, properly ſpeaking, makes no Expiation for paſt Trangreſſions, the natural Hope of Forgiveneſs upon Repentance is ſtill but *Hope*, and leaves Men under uncertain Apprehenſions in what Manner, to what Degree, and upon what Conditions, they are to be forgiven.

The Difference between the Saints of old, and Chriſtians in this Particular.

(y) As weak however as this *natural* Hope is, God was pleaſed, from Time to Time, to encourage it, by Revelation to the *Patriarchs*, in the Appointment and Acceptation of *Sacrifices*, by the whole Tenour of the *Moſaick* Law, in the Inſtitution of Expiations, and by all the *Preachings* and Exhortations of the *Prophets*; but, at length, by the coming of *Jeſus Chriſt*, the Diſpenſation of divine Mercy was completely open'd: Repentance and Remiſſion of Sins were commanded to be preached in his Name, through his Merit and Interceſſion, and, by the Terms of the new Covenant in his Blood, the *Method* of Sinners finding Acceptance and Reconciliation with God, (z) *Which, from the Beginning of the World, had been hid in him, according to the eternal Purpoſe, which he purpoſed through Chriſt Jeſus our Lord*, was fully and diſtinctly declared. Though therefore it cannot be doubted, but that the ſeveral *Worthies of old*, (a) *who died in Faith, not having received the Promiſes, but, ſeeing them afar off, were perſuaded of them, and embraced them*, were made Partakers of God's Pardon and Forgiveneſs; yet we muſt, nevertheleſs, acknowledge, that there is a mighty Difference between a *Truth*, that is *plainly* told, and what is only *myſtically* repreſented; between an *authoritative* Aſſurance

(x) *Williams*'s and *Turner*'s Ser. at *Boyle*'s Lect. (y) *Clarke*'s *Eſſay* upon Repentance. (z) Eph. iii. 9, 11. (a) Heb. xi. 13.

Aſſurance from the *Mouth* of God himſelf, and a *Concluſion* drawn by Man from a mere probable *Conjecture*; between a *fundamental* Article of Faith, and the Glimmerings of an uncertain Hope; between a *fœderal* Right to a divine Promiſe, over and over again repeated, and an *arbitrary* uncovenanted Act of Grace.

How theſe Saints came to find Acceptance *with God in their Repentance.*

If then it be demanded, by what Means it was, that the Saints in ancient Times obtained the Remiſſion of their Tranſgreſſions, the Anſwer is, (*b*) that the holy Scriptures do every where repreſent our Saviour, as having made Expiation for the Sins of *all Mankind* without Exception, for thoſe, that were born before his *Manifeſtation in the Fleſh*, as well as for thoſe, that lived ſince: For theſe are Goſpel Declarations, that he took our Nature upon him, (*c*) *that by the Grace of God, he might taſte Death for every Man*; that (*d*) *he gave himſelf a Ranſom for all, to be teſtified in due Time*; that (*e*) the Benefit of his Death was as extenſive, as the *Sin of Adam*; and that, in ſhort, in its Virtue and Merit, it reached *backward* to the Beginning of the World, as well as *forward* to the End of it; for ſuch is the Senſe of the *Apoſtle*'s Reaſoning; (*f*) *not that he ſhould offer himſelf often, as the High Prieſt entered into the holy Place every Year with the Blood of others (for then muſt he often have ſuffered ſince the Foundation of the World) but now once, in the End of the World, hath he appeared to put away Sin by the Sacrifice of himſelf:* whereby he plainly intimates, that this one Sacrifice had its Effect *from the Foundation of the World*; and its Effect, upon farther Enquiry, we ſhall find to be this, *viz.* that in Conſideration of ſo meritorious a Propitiation, God was ſo far reconciled to Men, as to give Place for Repentance, and to accept of it, wherever it was ſincerely offered.

(*g*) In the firſt *Covenant*, made with *Adam*, there was no Allowance made for Repentance after Tranſgreſſion: But, upon the Interpoſition of our *Redeemer*, and in Virtue of that *Expiation*, which he was to make, when he ſhould come into the World, Sinners were allowed and encouraged to repent, and to turn unto God, in Hopes of obtaining his Favour. The very *reſpiting* our firſt Parents from the *Execution* of the Sentence denounced, was an Intimation, that Repentance would be acceptable to God: The *Promiſe* made ſoon after the *Fall* was a *Confirmation* of the ſame Thing: God's *Inſtitution* and Encouragement of Sacrifices ſhewed his Inclinableneſs to Forgiveneſs, and the daily Inſtances of (*h*) his *Goodneſs and Forbearance* towards Mankind, naturally tended *to lead them to Repentance*, even as the ſame Duty (when God once made a *Revelation* of his Will) was every where inculcated in *the Law, in the Pſalms, and in the Prophets.* But now, the true Reaſon, why Repentance was admitted by God, and held of any *Validity* for the Remiſſion of Sins, was not from any *intrinſick* Worth in itſelf, but from the *Efficacy* of our Lord's undertaking for Mankind, which bore *Date* from the Beginning of the World; which extended itſelf to all ſucceeding Generations; which the holy *Patriarchs*, and other pious Men among the *Jews* were made Partakers of; and which the moſt barbarous People, living in the remoteſt and darkeſt Corners of the Earth, had graciouſly imputed to them; (*i*) *for of a Truth I perceive*, ſays the *Apoſtle*, *that God is no Reſpecter of Perſons, but that, in every Nation, he that feareth God, and worketh Righteouſneſs, is accepted with him*; but then it is (*k*) *in the beloved* that he findeth *Acceptance*, ſince *no Man can come unto God, but by him.*

That no Sins are ſo ſmall, *as to need no Forgiveneſs.*

But though the meritorious Sufferings of our bleſſed Lord, in all Ages, and in all Nations of the World, did ever make Repentance *acceptable* to God, and the *Sins* of Mankind remiſſible, yet have we no Grounds to think, that any of them are, in their Nature, ſo *ſmall* and *inconſiderable*, as to ſtand in Need of no Forgiveneſs. (*l*) That ſome Sins, in the *Event*, will not be recompenſed with Death eternal, whilſt others of a deeper *Die* will certainly expoſe the Tranſgreſſor to everlaſting Torments, is on all Hands readily agreed; but that this Difference ariſes from the different *Kinds* of the Sins, thus diſtinguiſhed in their Puniſhments; that thoſe leſs heinous Sins, which in Fact are not puniſhed with everlaſting Death, could not of Right be ſo puniſhed; that thoſe, who have been guilty of theſe leſſer Sins

(*b*) Bp. *Bradford*'s Ser. at *Boyle*'s Lect. (*c*) Heb. ii. 9. (*d*) 1 Tim. ii. 6. (*e*) Rom. v. 15, &c. (*f*) Heb. ix. 25, 26. (*g*) B. *Bradford* ibid. (*h*) Rom. ii. 4. (*i*) Acts x. 34, 35. (*k*) Eph. i. 6. (*l*) Bp. *Smalridge*'s Ser.

Sins only, can *challenge* an Acquittal at the Hand of God, and need not *ſue* for it through the Merits of a compaſſionate Saviour; that ſuch Perſons may demand a Releaſe from theſe leſſer Faults, into which they have, at any Time, through their Infirmity, fallen, and not rather have Recourſe to God's infinite Mercy, and, with the humble (*l*) *Publican*, *ſmite upon their Breaſts, and ſay, God be merciful to me a Sinner*; this we think cannot be affirmed, and believed, without great *Arrogance* and Preſumption, without an overweaning *Conceit* of ourſelves, and our own Sanctity, and without *forgetting* the Diſtance between the Majeſty of God, and *ſinful Duſt and Aſhes*. (*m*) *The Wages of Sin* indefinitely, whether greater or leſs, *is Death*, and (*n*) *whoſoever ſhall keep the whole Law, and yet offend in one Point, is guilty of all*, becauſe the Authority of the Legiſlator is equally ſlighted, and the Penalty of the Law equally incurred, by the lighter, as well as heavier Tranſgreſſions. In ſhort, (*o*) we are all required to walk in that *Path*, which God hath chalked out for us, *without turning either to the right Hand, or to the left*: ſome, who have departed out of the right Way, make larger Excurſions than others, but all, that tranſgreſs the Bounds, that God has ſet them, though they do not expatiate far, yet, by going the leaſt beyond their appointed *Line*, they lay themſelves open to God's Diſpleaſure, and may in Juſtice ſuffer the Puniſhment, which he has threatened to all Tranſgreſſors of his Law, and Contemners of his Authority.

None ſo great as not to be forgiven.

SUCH indeed is his *immaculate* Purity, that he cannot, without Abhorrence, *behold Evil*, he cannot, without the utmoſt Deteſtation, look upon any, even the leaſt, Iniquity; and yet, on the other Side, ſuch is his unbounded Mercy, that through the Merits of his beloved Son, and upon a proper Humiliation of the Offender, there is hardly any Sin ſo great, ſo enormous, but that he is readily diſpoſed to forgive it. In the *primitive* Church indeed, * there was a Sect of Men, who, upon a miſtaken Interpretation of ſome Paſſages of the Epiſtle to the *Hebrews*, contended, that for ſome very heinous and preſumptuous Sins (beſides the *Blaſphemy againſt the holy Ghoſt*) there was no Place for Repentance, nor any Remiſſion to be expected. The Paſſages that they thus miſinterpreted, were theſe two—— (*p*) *It is impoſſible for thoſe, that were once enlightened, and have been made Partakers of the holy Ghoſt, and have taſted the good Gift of God, and the Powers of the World to come, if they fall away, to recover them again unto Repentance*: For (*q*) *if we ſin wilfully* (as it is in the *other*) *after we have received the Knowledge of the Truth, there remaineth no more Sacrifice for Sins, but a certain fearful looking for of Judgment and fiery Indignation, which ſhall devour the Adverſaries*. Now, for a right Underſtanding of theſe Paſſages,

* The moſt conſiderable of theſe were the *Novatians*, who had their Name both from *Novatus*, and *Novatian*. *Novatus* was a Miniſter under St. *Cyprian*, but, being expelled the Church for his Irregularities, he betook himſelf to *Rome*, where he joined himſelf to *Novatian*, who having been once a *Stoick* Philoſopher, retained ſtill ſomething of the rigid Temper of that Sect; this Man was ordained *Preſbyter* by the Church, and, by Craft and Management with ſome weak, though well meaning Men, procured himſelf to be conſecrated *Biſhop*. Hereupon enſued a Difference between him and his *Dioceſan*, which *Novatus* improving, they joined together in the Oppoſition, and, to make the *Breach* wider, conſtituted it a Rule or Canon in their ſeparate Communion, that *whoever fell into any deadly Sin after holy Baptiſm, ought never again to be admitted to a Participation of divine Myſteries; that they are to be exhorted indeed to Repentance, howbeit not to be put in Hopes, that Pardon can be had at the Prieſt's Hands, but with God, who hath ſovereign Power and Authority in himſelf to remit Sin, it may be in the End they ſhall find Mercy*. This cruel and unmerciful Doctrine, ſo contrary to the *Spirit* of the Goſpel, and ſo deſtructive to the *Souls* of Men, was both condemned by a Council met at *Rome* for that Purpoſe, and ſtrenuouſly oppoſed by the Orthodox, eſpecially by St. *Cyprian*, who calls it "a ſevere Impiety of heretical Pre-"ſumption: by which the Conſolations of divine Pity and fatherly Lenity are ſhut againſt the penitent "and mourning Servants of God, who knock at the Church with Tears, Sighs, and Groans; ſo "that the wounded are not admitted to have their Wounds cured, but, being left without any Hope of "Peace or Communion, are thrown out to the Rapine of Wolves, and the Prey of the Devil:" And for the ſame Reaſon the ſaid Father calls *Novatian*, who was the principal Maintainer of theſe rigid Notions, *an Enemy of Mercy, a Murtherer of Repentance, a Doctor of Pride, a Corrupter of Truth, and a Deſtroyer of Charity*, Ep. 67 and 57. *Hooker*'s Eccl. Polity Lib. 6. Crit. Hiſt of the Creed, Ch. 7. and *Bingham*'s Antiq. C. 17.

(*l*) Luke xviii. 13. (*m*) Rom. vi. 23. (*n*) James ii. 10. (*o*) Bp. *Smalridge*'s Ser. (*p*) Heb. vi. 4, &c. (*q*) x. 26, 27.

Paſſages, we are to obſerve, firſt, that the Scripture often expreſſes that by *impoſſible*, which is extremely *difficult*, or which is impoſſible for human Strength only, unaſſiſted by divine Grace. Thus our bleſſed Saviour explains himſelf concerning *the (r) rich Man's entring into the Kingdom of God*, by ſaying, that though this be *impoſſible* with Regard to the Corruptions and Temptations of ſuch Perſons, and any Power of their own to reſiſt and vanquiſh them, yet (*s*) *the Things that are impoſſible with Men, are poſſible with God.* And, in like Manner, though Men, who reject and quench the holy Spirit by a wilful Continuance in Sin, cannot renew themſelves, yet God can give them the Heart and Power of Renovation. It is to be obſerved however, ſecondly, that theſe Paſſages are not intended of every Sort of wilful Offenders, but of ſuch only, as are guilty of a *total Apoſtacy* from Chriſt's Religion, an utter Abrenunciation of the Faith, and Profeſſion of the Goſpel: For (*t*) that they are ſo to be underſtod, is evident from the *Characters*, which the Apoſtle gives of them, *viz.* that they are open Enemies, or *Adverſaries* to Chriſt and his Cauſe, ſuch, as if they had it in their Power, would (*u*) *crucify afreſh the Son of God*, ſince they *trample him under Foot*, i. e. deny him to be riſen, and affirm that he is ſtill in the Grave, and, conſequently, that he was an Impoſtor; *count his Blood*, which was ſhed for the Confirmation of the new *Covenant*, *unholy* and impure, as the Blood of a *Malefactor*, and *deſpiſe* all the miraculous Proofs, and convictive Evidence of the Truth of Chriſtianity, which was given by the holy Ghoſt, that *Spirit of Grace*. And theſe Men to be ſure it is impoſſible to *renew*, while they continue in their *Apoſtacy*, becauſe they have caſt off their only Remedy. (*x*) Faith is the indiſpenſible Condition of Pardon, but this they have renounced and diſclaimed, and, conſequently, are not within the *Covenant*, not under the Influence of Grace, nor in any Poſſibility of Benefit from the Sacrifice of that Blood, which they eſteem *common*, and no *Sacrifice at all*. But the Caſe is far otherwiſe with them, who are engaged in a ſinful Courſe, and yet have not thrown off the Foundation of Chriſtianity. They may ſee their Folly, and break off their *Fellowſhip with the unfruitful Works of Darkneſs*. They may comply with the good Motions of God's bleſſed Spirit, and acknowledge the Merit of their Saviour's Atonement. They may repent and amend; and, whenever they do ſo, they have a Promiſe of Pardon applicable to all Sinners, of all Kinds, at all Times, and in all Circumſtances: *when (y) the wicked Man turneth away from his Wickedneſs that he hath committed, and doeth that which is lawful and right, he ſhall ſave his Soul alive; becauſe he conſidereth, and turneth away from all his Tranſgreſſions, that he hath committed, he ſhall ſurely live, he ſhall not die.*

Why penitent Sinners may not be made ſenſible of their Forgiveneſs.

We muſt allow however, that every Sinner, *turning away from his Tranſgreſſions*, is not immediately made ſenſible of his Forgiveneſs, becauſe there are ſundry Reaſons why God ſhould *withhold* that Aſſurance from him. (*z*) *To humble him under his mighty Hand, that he may exalt him in due Time*; to affect him with a deeper Sorrow, Shame, and Remorſe for his paſt Iniquities, that, as often as he ſurveys them, he may, with holy *Job*, (*a*) *abhor himſelf, and repent in Duſt and Aſhes*; to poſſeſs him with full Apprehenſion of the Terror of the divine Majeſty, that thereupon he may examine his Repentance with more Carefulneſs, (*b*) *and work out his Salvation with Fear and Trembling*; to try his Submiſſion to the Will of God, and that (*c*) *his Faith working Patience, and Patience having her perfect Work, he may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing*; to excite his Caution and Circumſpection in the future Courſe of his Life, and by the *Pain*, he undergoes in his preſent Humiliation, to ſecure him againſt the Danger of a *Relapſe*; to put him in Mind of *redeeming the Time*, he has miſſpent, by exerting the contrary Virtues more vigorouſly for the Time to come; to give him an Opportunity of Searching into the ſmaller Defects and Errors of his Conduct, that ſo, at the Time of his Departure hence, (*d*) *he may be found of our Lord in Peace, without Spot and Blemiſh:* And to make the Senſe of his Forgiveneſs, whenever God thinks fit to convey it to his Soul, not only more *welcome*, but more *eſtimable*

(*r*) Matt. xix. 26. (*s*) Luke xviii. 27. (*t*) *Kettlewell's* Chriſt. Obed. (*u*) Heb. x. 27, 29. (*x*) *Stanhope's* Occa. Ser. (*y*) Ezek. xviii. 27, 28. (*z*) 1 Pet. v. 6. (*a*) Job xlii. 6. (*b*) Phil. ii. 12. (*c*) James i. 4. (*d*) 2 Pet. iii. 14.

likewiſe, in Proportion to the *Pains* he took, and the *Diligence* he uſed to attain it: Theſe, and ſeveral other Reaſons of the like Nature may induce to divine Wiſdom to detain from the penitent Sinner the comfortable Aſſurance of the Remiſſion of his Tranſgreſſions, and to keep him under ſome *Doubt* and Suſpence, as to the Safety of his ſpiritual Eſtate, even at the Time, that he is actually forgiven. For God is a wiſe and careful Father of his Children, he keeps them under Diſcipline, and knows that it is much more ſafe and neceſſary for them, to be *good*, than to be *pleaſed*, and therefore he generally denies them ſuch rich *Cordials*, as the Senſe of a plenary Pardon is, unleſs it be in ſome great Extremities, or when they are in Danger of being *ſwallowed up by too much ſorrowing*.

Why temporal *Puniſhments*,

NAY, with him it is no unuſual Thing to continue *temporal* Puniſhments upon them, at the ſame Time that he has abſolved them from *eternal*. Afflictions of this Kind indeed are Indications of the divine Kindneſs, not of any Diſpleaſure againſt us, and therefore the Apoſtle tells us, that (*e*) *when we are thus judged, we are chaſtened of the Lord, that we ſhould not be condemned with the World*; even as *David*, after he had had an Abſolution from his great and grievous Offences from the Mouth of the Prophet *Nathan*, is nevertheleſs told, that, (*f*) *becauſe, by this Deed he had given great Occaſion to the Enemies of the Lord to blaſpheme, the Child, that was born or begotten of him, ſhould ſurely die*; and from hence we may learn, that however Men, upon their Repentance, may promiſe themſelves the Forgiveneſs of Sin, ſo far as it obligeth to everlaſting Puniſhment, yet when their Sins are ſo flagrant, ſo ſcandalous, as thoſe of *David* were, they cannot confide in ſuch a Remiſſion, as ſhall exempt them from the Obligation both of *temporal* and eternal Puniſhment. It is a ſufficient Bleſſing to be delivered *from the Wrath to come*, whatever their Chaſtiſements may be in this World: And therefore (*g*) *why doth a living Man complain, a Man for the Puniſhment of his Sins?* eſpecially, when his Puniſhment is frequently nothing elſe, but the natural Effect of a profligate Courſe of Living, which though God has been graciouſly pleaſed to forgive, he cannot poſſibly remove, without working a ſpecial Miracle.

Providential *Afflictions*,

(*h*) *No chaſtning* indeed (though it come immediately from the Hand of God) *ſeemeth for the preſent to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheleſs, afterwards it yieldeth the peaceable Fruit of Righteouſneſs unto them that are exerciſed thereby*; and theſe are generally ſuch Perſons, as are far from being the Objects of the divine Diſpleaſure. St. *Paul*, we know, was a *choſen Veſſel*, and a Favourite of Heaven; and yet God thought fit to afflict him (*i*) with *a Thorn in the Fleſh, a Meſſenger of Satan ſent to buffet him*, and to keep him humble, leſt he *ſhould be exalted above Meaſure through the Abundance of the Revelations, that were given him. For this Thing he beſought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from him*; but he only received this Anſwer—*that God's Grace ſhould be ſufficient for him, that God's Strength ſhould be perfected in his Weakneſs*; and with this Anſwer he was ſatisfied, making no farther Complaints, but *chuſing* rather *to glory in his Infirmities, that the Power of Chriſt might reſt upon him*. The Afflictions of *Job*, in like Manner, were not Expreſſions of God's Wrath, but of his infinite Wiſdom and Kindneſs to him, to approve his *Patience* to all the World, and to give him ſuch a ſurprizing Victory over *Satan*, as made even the Adverſary himſelf imagine, that there was ſomething more in *human* Nature, aſſiſted by Grace, than he before was apprehenſive of, and to teach true Penitents this Leſſon of Comfort, that the ſeverer Diſpenſations of Providence are not always Scourges, but ſometimes Mercies, to try their Patience, to improve their Humility, and to preſerve them from the Danger of ſinning.

Anxious Fears *and Apprehenſions*,

THE *Remembrance* of our former Tranſgreſſions may be allowed to occaſion ſome anxious *Fears*, and Apprehenſions of God's Anger and Diſpleaſure to ariſe in our Minds; but if theſe Tranſgreſſions be the Things, whereof we have already repented, ſuch Fears and Miſgivings of Mind are no Indications of our being out of God's Favour, but rather *Tokens* of his Mercy, who ſuffers them to recur upon us, to make our Repentance commenſurate to our Lives, and by the Abhorrence of by-paſſed Sins, to keep us from future falling. No Perſon could ever be better aſſured of the Pardon of his Sins, than was *David*, and yet,

(*e*) 1 Cor. xi. 32. (*f*) 2 Sam. xii. 13, 14. (*g*) Lam. iii. 39. (*h*) Heb. xii. 11. (*i*) 2 Cor. xii. 7, &c.

yet, upon every Remembrance of them, and the divine Majeſty, which he had offended by them, the Agonies and Conflicts of his Soul were inexpreſſible. (*k*) *I remembered God, and was troubled; I complained, and my Spirit was overwhelmed. Thou holdeſt mine Eyes waking; I am ſo troubled, that I cannot ſpeak. Will the Lord caſt me off for ever? And will he be no more intreated? Is his Mercy clean gone for ever? And does his Promiſe fail for evermore? Hath God forgotten to be gracious? Hath he in Anger ſhut up his tender Mercies?* But at laſt he recollects, and checks himſelf for theſe Expoſtulations: *I ſaid it is my own Infirmity, but I will remember the Years of the* right Hand of *the moſt High.* I will call to Mind what God before had done for me, and then there will be no Room, no Reaſon for ſuch Complaints as theſe.

Sinful Remains in us.

The *Remainders* of Sin in our Nature may likewiſe give us ſome Uneaſineſs, and, if theſe relate to any wilful, groſs, and habitual Sin, good Reaſon have we to be uneaſy, becauſe our Repentance then is inſincere, and, in that Caſe, God cannot ſpeak Peace and Reconciliation to our Souls: But when they relate only to *leſſer* Sins of Ignorance, Inadvertency, ſudden Surprize, and human Frailty, theſe are conſiſtent with a State of Grace and Favour, becauſe the very beſt Men are ſtill liable to them. Whilſt we are in this Body of Fleſh, theſe Failings and Imperfections will ever abide in us, and God for gracious Purpoſes ſuffers them to abide, thereby to exerciſe our Care and Vigilance, to keep us humble and depending upon his Grace, and quicken our Addreſſes to him for more and more Strength to overcome them. Againſt theſe Imperfections we ought to watch and ſtrive, as much as we can: For theſe we ought to grieve and afflict our Souls, and aſpire after that Place, which will ſet us at Liberty from them; but, whilſt we are in this Vale of Miſery, we muſt be content to bear theſe, as Part of our Afflictions, which nothing but Death, or rather a Victory over Death and Mortality, will wholly conquer.

And a Liableneſs *to Temptations are incident to thoſe, that are* forgiven.

Once more, our *Liableneſs* to Temptations, and to the Aſſaults of the Enemy of our Souls, may make us ſuſpect, that our Sins are not forgiven us, for otherwiſe we cannot but think that God would reſtrain him from making his Attempts upon us. But, to ſatisfy this Scruple, we may obſerve, that our bleſſed Lord, who was certainly *without Sin,* and but juſt before declared (*l*) *by a Voice from Heaven to be the Son of God, in whom he was well pleaſed,* was *tempted by the Devil,* nay (*m*) *was led into the Wilderneſs by the Spirit of God,* to the Intent that he might be *tempted*; and therefore let no Man, how righteous ſoever he may be, much more let no penitent Sinner that has but lately eſcaped from the *Prince of Darkneſs,* promiſe himſelf an Exemption from his Aſſaults, becauſe it is no more, than may be expected, that he ſhould exert his utmoſt Endeavours to get back his Prey, when he is in ſuch viſible Danger of loſing it for ever. *If thou come* therefore *to ſerve the Lord,* ſays the *wiſe* Man, *prepare thy ſelf for Temptation; ſet thine Heart aright, and conſtantly endure; and make not haſte* (be not impatient) *in Time of Trouble. Cleave unto God, and depart not away, that thou mayeſt be increaſed at thy laſt End.* The Temptations, which God permits Satan ſometimes to bring upon us, if ſo be we reſiſt and repel them, are none of our *Crimes.* They may create us ſome Trouble and Anguiſh, and to think that the Devil has Power to work upon our *Imaginations,* and thereby to diſturb our Thoughts, may be an uneaſy Reflection perhaps; but, ſo long as our *Wills* (over which he has no Control) yield no Content to his Suggeſtions, the moſt *fiery* of all his *Darts* and the *ſubtileſt* of all his *Devices* cannot hurt us, but eventually may be of Service to us, to quicken our Zeal, redouble our Care, invigorate our Faith, inflame our Devotion, and make us fly, with greater Frequency, and greater Fervency, to the *Throne of Grace,* being aſſured of this —— that in *ſuch a Time of Need* God will *help us,* and (*n*) *not ſuffer us to be tempted above what we are able, but will with the Temptation alſo make a Way to eſcape, that we may be able to bear it.*

The Bleſſedneſs *of being* forgiven.

Upon the whole therefore, though the Remiſſion of our Sins does not altogether exempt us from Frailties, from Afflictions, from Temptations, and other incidental Troubles, that may ſometimes diſcompoſe our Spirits; yet we may ſtill conclude with

(*k*) Pſal. lxxvii. 3, &c. (*l*) Matt. iii. 17. (*m*) Matt. iv. 1. (*n*) 1 Cor. x. 13.

with the Royal *Pſalmiſt*, (o) *Bleſſed is the Man, whoſe Tranſgreſſion is forgiven, and whoſe Sin is cover'd. Bleſſed is the Man, to whom the Lord imputeth no Iniquity.* To have all his Debts cancell'd, his Follies buried in Forgetfulneſs, his Deformities cover'd, his Conſcience quieted, and the Light of God's Countenance ſhining upon him, to have no frightful Reflection upon what is paſt, no diſmal Proſpect of what is to come, but a full Aſſurance of Hope every Day more and more increaſing upon him, how muſt this needs fill a Man with Chearfulneſs, and Serenity in every Condition of Life; for (p) *who ſhall lay any Thing to his Charge? It is God that juſtifieth: Who is he that condemneth? It is Chriſt that died: Who ſhall ſeparate him from the Love of God, ſhall Tribulation, or Diſtreſs, or Perſecution, or Famine, or Nakedneſs, or Peril, or the Sword?* The Sting of all theſe Things is taken out, ſince God has forgiven his Sins. But now, on the contrary, (q) when a Man knows God to be angry with him, and his own Conſcience clamours and remonſtrates againſt him; when the ſad Remembrance of his many Provocations terrify him, and the fearful Expectation of Wrath to come, (r) *trouble his Thoughts, and looſen*, as it were, *the Joints of his Loins*; let him (s) *invent to himſelf Inſtruments of Muſick, drink Wine in Bowls, and anoint himſelf with the chief Ointments*, yet he cannot be happy; even (t) in *Laughter the Heart is ſorrowful, and the End of that Mirth is Heavineſs*, as often as he remembers, that, for his Sins unpardoned, and unrepented of, the Wrath of God reſts upon him. In a Word, the *Forgiveneſs* of our Sins is (u) the *ultimate* Happineſs of Man; that, which anſwers the End and Deſign of our being here; for which our Time, Means, and Capacities were given us; and therefore, in ſecuring this, we do our *Buſineſs* at once, both for this Life, and for ever; but, in neglecting it, we certainly incur the *Perdition* of our Souls, and (x) *what is a Man profited* (as our Saviour ſtates the Difference) if he lives never ſo gayly, never ſo voluptuouſly nay, if he were able even *to gain the whole World, and loſe his own Soul? Or what ſhall a Man give in Exchange for his Soul?*

The DISSERTATION.

Of Sacerdotal Abſolution.

The Senſe of the Paſſages, upon which the Doctrine of Abſolution *is founded.*

TO form a better Notion of the *Nature* of that *Abſolution*, which our bleſſed Lord gave his Apoſtles, and in them their Succeſſors, an *Authority* to diſpenſe to all *true* Penitents, even to the End of the World, it may not be improper to premiſe a ſhort Obſervation or two, in Relation to thoſe Paſſages, wherein their *Commiſſion is expreſſed.*

UPON St. *Peter*'s liberal Confeſſion of our Lord's *Divinity*, he received this gracious Promiſe from his Lips, (y) *I will give unto thee the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven, and whatſoever thou ſhalt bind on Earth, ſhall be bound in Heaven, and whatſoever thou ſhalt looſe on Earth, ſhall be looſed in Heaven. By the Kingdom of Heaven* we are to underſtand the *Church* of Chriſt, whereof Heaven is the *Metropolis*, or principal Part, and therefore the Members of this Church are called (z) *the Citizens of Heaven*, and (a) *Fellow-Citizens with the Saints.* This Kingdom our Saviour ſometimes repreſents under the Notion of (b) *an Houſe*, into which ſome are *admitted*, and others *excluded*, according to their different Merits; and the *Miniſters*, or Officers of his Houſe are frequently called (c) *the Stewards of his Houſhold:* As therefore the Uſe of a *Key* is to open, or ſhut the Door, by *opening* to give Admittance, and by *ſhutting* to prohibit Entrance into any Place; and as the Buſineſs of the *Steward* is to take in Servants, or diſmiſs them, as he ſhall find them *fit* or *unfit* for his Maſter's Service; ſo the *Power*, which our Saviour, here ſpeaking to St. *Peter*, confers upon him, and the reſt of his Apoſtles, is this — (d) that they ſhould be the *chief* Rulers and Governors of his Church, and, as ſuch, ſhould have *Authority* to admit or exclude ſuch Perſons, as

(o) Pſal. xxxii. 1, 2. (p) Rom. viii. 33, &c. (q) *Goodman*'s Penit. Pard. (r) Dan. v. 6.
(s) Amos vi. 5, 6. (t) Prov. xiv. 13. (u) *Newcomb*'s Catech. Ser. (x) Matt. xvi. 26.
(y) Matt. xvi. 19. (z) Phil. iii. 20. (a) Eph. ii. 19. (b) Luke xiv. 23, &c.
(c) Luke xii. 42. (d) A. Bp. *Potter* of Ch. Gover.

as they ſhould judge convenient. That this is the Meaning of our Saviour's Promiſe is plain from the Terms of *binding and looſing*, which commonly ſignify *impriſoning* or *releaſing from Priſon*, and is the proper Buſineſs of thoſe, that have the *Cuſtody of the Keys*; and therefore, when applied to the Members of Chriſt's Church, muſt denote an Authority in the Officers thereof to *condemn* them for their Sins or to *abſolve* them, which, in the *ſpiritual* Senſe of theſe Expreſſions, is the only Way of impriſoning, or releaſing from Priſon.

Upon another Occaſion we find our Lord repeating the ſame Words to *all* his Apoſtles and Diſciples in general: For, having inſtructed them in what Manner they were to behave when others had offended them, he immediately ſubjoins, (*e*) *Verily I ſay unto you, whatſoever ye ſhall bind on Earth, ſhall be bound in Heaven, and whatſoever ye ſhall looſe on Earth, ſhall be looſed in Heaven.* The Words in both Places are *whatſoever*, and not *whomſoever ye ſhall bind, or looſe*, which (as (*f*) ſome imagine) relate not to *Perſons*, but *Things*, and, conſequently, that their Senſe is, that *whatever* the Apoſtles ſhould *bind*, i. e. declare to be *unlawful*, or *whatever* they ſhould *looſe*, i. e. allow to be *lawful* to be done, ſhould be ſo *eſteemed* and confirmed in Heaven. But, beſides that this is a very *forced* and unnatural Conſtruction, it it certainly falſe in *Fact* that the Apoſtles had any Power to *make* or declare a Thing to be *lawful*, or unlawful, that was not ſo made by Chriſt himſelf. (*g*) As therefore it is no uncommon Thing in all Languages to put *Adjectives* in the *neuter Gender*, inſtead of *Subſtantives*, and, by that Means, to expreſs *Things*, when *Perſons* are underſtood, ſo that the Words now before us can properly relate to *Perſons* only, is evident from the *Content*, (*h*) where Mention is made of the *Offender*, the *Offended*, the *Witneſſes* he convenes, and the *Appeal* he makes to the *Church*; and wherein indeed we have the whole Form of a *judicial Proceſs* ſet before us in our Lord's directing the injured Party, *firſt* to tell the Offender of his Fault *privately*; if that have no Effect, *next* to admoniſh him before *Witneſſes*; if this Admonition proves unſucceſsful, *then* to complain to the Church, but *if he neglects to hear the Church*, at laſt muſt the Church's *Sentence* come out againſt him, whereby he is ſeparated from the Communion of the Faithful, and reduced to the Sate and Condition of an *Heathen*, and that Sentence, being decreed in Virtue of Chriſt's *Commiſſion*, he will confirm and ratify *in Heaven*.

After our Lord's Reſurrection, he appeared to his Apoſtles in the *Evening* and ſaid unto them, (*i*) *Peace be unto you, as my Father hath ſent me, ſo ſend I you, and when he had ſaid this, he breathed on them, and ſaid unto them, receive ye the Holy Ghoſt; whoſeſoever Sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them, and whoſeſoever Sins ye retain, they are retained*; where *retaining* and *remitting* are of the ſame Import with *binding* and *looſing* in the former Paſſages; and by the Word *whoſeſoever* it plainly appears (as we ſaid before) that they relate to *Perſons*: But then, by this Paſſage (*k*) ſome underſtand no more, than that the Apoſtles were hereby authorized to *preach* the Goſpel, which whoſoever *embraced*, ſhould have his Sins *forgiven*, but whoſoever *rejected* it, ſhould have them *retained*, i. e. not forgiven. But, beſides the manifeſt Force put upon the Words, which in the whole *New* Teſtament never once occur in this Senſe, from the Hiſtory of the Goſpel it is evident, that the Apoſtles received Commiſſion to *preach*, when they were firſt *ordained*, but that the Power of *binding* and *looſing*, or *retaining* and *remitting Sins*, was not *promiſed* them, till ſome Time after, nor was it ever actually *conferred* upon them, till after the Time of our Lord's Reſurrection, when he had received *all Power both in Heaven and Earth*. In preaching the Goſpel likewiſe, they were obliged to make *Application to all Nations*, and *to every Creature*, without Partiality or Diſtinction, but, in *remitting* or *retaining* Sins, they were to have Reſpect to the *Merit* or *Demerit* of the Perſons, to whom theſe Offices were extended: Since therefore our Saviour aſſures them, that he ſent them with the ſame *Authority*, wherewith *his Father had ſent him*, which Authority (as the *Jews* underſtood him, otherwiſe they would not have charged him with *Blaſphemy*) he actually exerted (*l*) in the Caſe of the *Paralytick*, and (*m*) the

(*e*) Matt. xviii. 18. (*f*) Vid. *Whitby* in Locum. (*g*) *Potter* ibid. (*h*) Matt. xviii. 15, &c.
(*i*) John xx. 21, &c. (*k*) Vid. *Whitby* in Locum. (*l*) Matt. ix. 2, 3. (*m*) Luke vii. 37, &c.

Woman, that waſhed his Feet, there is no Doubt to be made, but that the Power of *remitting Sins*, which he delegated to his Apoſtles, was of the ſame Kind, with what he himſelf exerciſed, while he was here upon Earth.

The Difference *between God's forgiving Sins, and Man's.*

THE Objection of the *Jews* againſt his *Abſolutions*, had he not been God, as well as Man, had been very right, (*n*) *for who can forgive Sins, but God alone?* But then we may obſerve, that Man, by a Power *delegated* from God, may be authorized to do this, though the *Manner*, in which he does it, is widely *different* from that of God's. (*o*) The *Power* of God, in forgiving Sins, is *abſolute* and ſovereign; his *Judgment unerring* and infallible about the Subjects, who are capable of Pardon; and, conſequently, his *Sentence* always *exact* and irreverſible by any Power whatſoever. Whereas the Power of Man, in forgiving Sins, is not abſolute but only *miniſterial*: His *Commiſſion* and Authority is not only *derivative*, but confin'd to certain Rules, which are to be the Meaſures of his Proceedings in this Affair with his Fellow-Creatures. Conſequently, his *Judgment* is neither infallible, nor his *Sentence* irreverſible, but only ſo far as he obſerves the *Rules* preſcribed by his ſovereign Lord, who ſtill reſerves to himſelf the Privilege of *reviewing* the Determination of his *Vicegerents* and Judges upon Earth, and of judging over again their *Sentence* by his *final* and unerring Judgment. In this then conſiſts the remarkable Difference between the Power of God and Man in forgiving Sins; that the one does it by an *abſolute* and *independent* Authority, the other only by a *ſubordinate* and limited Commiſſion, but this does not hinder him from bearing a miniſterial Part in this Tranſaction, ſo far as the Bounds of his Commiſſion do extend.

The ſeveral Kinds *of Abſolution in the Church.*

Now, that our bleſſed Lord inſtituted a *Society*, which is called his *Church*, diſtinct from the civil State, as being appointed for other Ends, governed by other Miniſters, and guided by peculiar Laws, can hardly be denied: If then the *Power of the Keys, of binding and looſing, of retaining and remitting*, as delivered by our Lord to his Apoſtles, be of any Manner of Significance, then muſt the *Rulers* of this Society have Authority to *admit* or *exclude* ſuch Perſons, as they deem to be proper or improper Members of it. (*p*) No Man can ſo much as govern one *Family* in the Capacity of a Father or Maſter, who is not inveſted with ſuch a Power, much leſs then can a larger Society be maintained in Peace and Safety without it; and therefore, though the Scripture had been ſilent in this Particular, is it reaſonable to ſuppoſe, that there muſt of Neceſſity be inherent in the Church, as well as any other Society, a Power of *debarring* great and notorious Offenders from its Communion, and of *receiving* them in again upon their Submiſſion and Repentance: But for this we have *Precedents* enough. (*q*) St. *Paul* not only * *delivered unto Satan* (as he expreſſes it) *Hymeneus and Alexander, that they might learn not to blaſpheme*, but in Virtue of that Power, which our Lord had committed to him, he firſt *excommunicated* the *inceſtuous* Perſon, who had given great Offence to the Church of *Corinth*, and then, when the Sufferings, he had undergone, had brought him to a Senſe of his Offence, in Virtue of the ſame (*r*) *Authority which was given him for Edification, and not for Deſtruction*, he granted him *Abſolution*. For (*s*) *to whom ye forgive any Thing*, ſays he, *I forgive alſo in the Perſon of Chriſt*: So that here is full Evidence, that the Apoſtles exerciſed a *judicial* Power over the Members of the Church, by *cenſuring* Offenders; and afterwards remitting the Cenſures

Judicial,

* For the better Underſtanding of this Expreſſion, we muſt obſerve, that the Kingdom of *Chriſt* was inſtituted in Oppoſition to the Kingdom of *Satan*; that, at their Baptiſm, all Chriſtians *renounce the Devil and his Works*, and are thereupon admitted into the Church of Chriſt, and taken under his Protection; but that, when they notoriouſly break their *baptiſmal Covenant*, and, inſtead of obeying Chriſt, do openly adhere to the Devil, they are again excluded from the Church, and, conſequently, delivered back to Satan, who, in this *Age of Miracles*, by God's Permiſſion, uſed commonly to torment their Bodies with ſome *viſible* Diſeaſe, thereby to give Weight to the *Cenſures* of the Church, and to ſupply its Want of *civil* and coercive Power, as well as to humble the Delinquent, and to bring him to Repentance, in order to his final Salvation. How long this *miraculous* Power continued in the Church, it is difficult to determine, hardly beyond the *apoſtolick* Age: But, notwithſtanding its Subduction, ſuch, as are caſt out of the Church, are ſtill in great Danger of being expoſed to the Malice of *Satan*, until they repent and return to her *Boſom*. *Cave*'s Prim. Chriſt. *Comber* on Excomm. and A. Bp. *Potter*'s Ch. Government.

(*n*) Luke v. 21. (*o*) *Bingham* on the *Nature* and *Neceſſity* of *Abſolution*. (*p*) *Comber* on *Excommunication*. (*q*) 1 Tim. i. 20. (*r*) 2 Cor. x. 8. (*s*) 2 Cor. ii. 10.

Cenſures paſſed on them, upon their Repentance; and the like Practice we ſhall find in the ſucceeding Ages of the Church.

(*t*) *Tertullian* has given us an Account, in what Manner the Governors of the Church proceeded both in the *Suſpenſion* and Abſolution of any criminal. The *firſt* Thing (*u*) they did, was to make *Reproofs* and Exhortations to the *Offender*, thereby to bring him to the Sight and Acknowledgment of his Fault; and then the *Sentence* or *Cenſure* was pronounced againſt him, whereby he was ſuſpended not only from the Communion of the Holy *Euchariſt*, but from all Commerce in any, eſpecially publick Duties of Religion. During the *Space* of this Suſpenſion, which was longer or ſhorter, according to the Nature of the Crime, the *Penitent* appeared in all the *Formalities* of Sorrow and Mourning, and lay proſtrate at the Church-Door in *Sackcloth and Aſhes*, hanging on the Garments and Knees of thoſe, that entered in, making open Confeſſion of his Faults, and, with Rivers of Tears in his Eyes, imploring the Prayers of the Miniſters, and all good Chriſtians to God, for his Pardon and Forgiveneſs. When the Time of his *Penance* was ended, he addreſſed himſelf to the Governors of the Church for *Abſolution*, whereupon his Repentance was taken into Examination, and, being found to be ſincere and real, he was openly *re-admitted* into the Church by the *Impoſition* of the Hands of the *Biſhop*, if preſent, or, in his Abſence, of a *Preſbyter*, who, laying his Hand upon his Head, ſolemnly bleſſed and abſolved him: Thereupon he was received with the univerſal Conſent and Acclamations of the People, who bleſſed God for his Return, and many Times wept for the *Joy* of his *Recovery*, which not only reſtored him to a Participation of the *Lord's Supper*, but of all other Acts and Privileges, wherein the Happineſs of Church-Communion does conſiſt. This was the *primitive* Method of proceeding with Delinquents, which our Church, in her *Commination*, earneſtly wiſhes to have revived, and which, if her Clergy applied, according to the Rules preſcribed them by Chriſt, their Sentence, though only *miniſterial*, might be of ſingular Efficacy (*x*) to *reform* the Offender, to *warn* others not to follow the ill Example, and to clear the Church from that *Scandal*, which the Acts of evil Men, profeſſing themſelves Chriſtians, may bring upon it, if they be ſuffered to go unpuniſhed.

Sacramental, But, beſides this Act of releaſing from *Church Cenſures*, there is an *Abſolution*, which is commonly called *ſacramental*, becauſe it goes along with the Ordinances, which Chriſt has inſtituted in his Church (*y*). By the Sacrament of *Baptiſm* the Miniſters of Chriſt, being authorized to admit Proſelytes and Converts, and, in theſe Times, Children and Infants, into the Chriſtian Church, are ſo far qualified to grant Remiſſion of Sins, becauſe they adminiſter that, which is effectual to the Remiſſion of Sins, as it is the *Seal* of God's Covenant, and a *Means* of conveying all the ſpiritual Benefits of Chriſt's Death and Paſſion to thoſe, who, in the Sincerity of their Hearts, come duly prepared to receive it. And, as the Sacrament of the *Lord's Supper* is likewiſe a *Means* of conveying and ſealing the Remiſſion of Sins, and only differs from Baptiſm in this, *viz.* that Baptiſm is the *firſt Grant* of that Bleſſing, the Lord's Supper is a Continuation and Repetition of it, the Miniſters of Chriſt, as proper *Stewards of his Myſteries*, being empowered to *admit* the *worthy* to a Participation of the *Euchariſt*; and to *debar* the *unworthy* from the Benefit of ſuch Communion, are ſo far inveſted with Authority to *remit* or *retain* Mens Sins, as they are Judges of their Qualifications for the Reception, or Non-reception of that *Myſtery*, upon which, in the ordinary Method and Diſpenſation of Grace, the Pardon of their Sins is made to depend.

Precatory, Again, beſides this *ſacramental* Abſolution, another Act of the *miniſterial* Power is Prayer, or Interceſſion with God for the Forgiveneſs of Sins, through the Merits and Mediation of our Saviour Chriſt. Under the *Law* the Remiſſion of Sins, by Way of *Benediction*, was what God himſelf had appointed, (*z*) for *in this wiſe ſhall ye bleſs the Children of Iſrael* (ſays he, directing his Command to *Aaron* and his Sons) *The Lord bleſs thee, and keep thee: The Lord make his Face to ſhine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: The Lord lift up his Countenance upon thee, and give thee Peace. Thus ſhall ye put my Name upon*

(*t*) Ap. Ch. 39. (*u*) *Cave*'s prim. Chriſt. (*x*) *Comber* on Excomm. (*y*) *Bingham* on *Abſolution*. (*z*) Numb. vi. 23, &c.

on the Children of Iſrael, and I will bleſs them, in the *primitive* Church, when *Penitents*, after *Excommunication*, and a long Courſe of *Diſcipline*, were received into Grace and Favour again, all Abſolutions were accompanied with *Impoſition* of Hands, and with *Prayer*, to denote (as (*a*) my Author obſerves) that the miniſterial Benediction, and *Interceſſion* with God for Sinners, was the main *Branch* of *Sacerdotal* Power in the Buſineſs of *evangelical* Abſolution; and accordingly our Church looks upon it in the ſame Light: for, in her Communion Service, the Form of her Abſolution is this—"Almighty God, our hea-"venly Father, who of his great Mercy "hath promiſed Forgiveneſs of Sins to all "them, that, with hearty Repentance, "and true Faith, turn unto him, have "Mercy upon you; pardon and deliver "you from all your Sins; confirm and "ſtrengthen you in all Goodneſs; and "bring you to everlaſting Life, through "Jeſus Chriſt our Lord." The Form, you may obſerve, is intirely *benedictory*; and from hence we may conclude, that, in her Judgment, Prayer and Interceſſion, whereby God is pleaſed to ſhower down the Bleſſing of Forgiveneſs upon his People, is one Sort of *miniſterial* Abſolution.

Declaratory. ONCE more, beſides this *precatory* Form, our Church makes uſe of a *declaratory* Abſolution, both for *general* and *particular* Purpoſes. Her general Abſolution follows the *Confeſſion* of Sins in her daily *Liturgy*, wherein it is ſaid, that *God hath given Power and Commandment to his Miniſters to declare and pronounce to his People, being penitent, the Abſolution and Remiſſion of their Sins*, and in Virtue of this Power, the Miniſter declares, that *God pardoneth and abſolveth all them, that truly repent, and unfeignedly believe his holy Goſpel:* And the Deſign of this is—to excite and encourage all Sinners to repent, and to turn to God in Hopes of Mercy, and to give Comfort and Conſolation to all ſuch, as have actually turned, and are in a State of Peace and Reconciliation with him. Her *particular* Abſolution is appointed to be given to *ſingle* Perſons, on ſome ſpecial Occaſions, *i. e.* (*b*) when they labour under *Trouble* of Mind, and *Diſquiet* of Conſcience, for any *particular* Sins, which they make Confeſſion of to the Miniſter, with proper Signs of a genuine Repentance. In that Caſe, the Miniſter is authorized, not only to give them *ghoſtly* Counſel and Advice, but likewiſe the Benefit of Abſolution, if, upon a juſt Examination of their State, he judges them to be real Penitents before God, and deſerving of it. In her *Viſitation Office* however, our Church ſeems to be a little more peremptory: for, *by the Authority, which the Lord Jeſus Chriſt has committed to me* (ſays the Miniſter,) *I abſolve thee from all thy Sins, in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy Ghoſt:* But (*c*) theſe Words, how ſtrong ſoever they may ſound in our Ears, are, in reality, no more, than a *Declaration* of the Sinner's Pardon, upon the apparent Evidences of a ſincere Repentance, and the beſt *Judgment*, that the Miniſter can make of his Condition, beyond which none can go, but the *Searcher* of Hearts, to whom alone belongs the *infallible* and *irreverſible* Sentence of *Abſolution*.

Confeſſion *of Sins to the Miniſter upon what Account* proper *and* expedient.

IN order to this *particular declarative Abſolution*, our Church, though ſhe does not abſolutely *command*, yet does ſhe *recommend Confeſſion* of Sins to our ſpiritual Guides, to whom the Direction of our Conſciences is more immediately committed. And indeed, whither can any Man, under Trouble and Anxiety of Mind, betake himſelf, but to thoſe, whom God has appointed as proper *Helps* and Judges in his Caſe; whoſe *Office* inveſts them with ſomething of *Authority*, and whoſe *Studies* and Experience qualify them to perform it? In all other Concerns, when Men labour under Doubts and Difficulties, common Reaſon and Intereſt direct them what to do. He, who is diffident of his *Title* to a *temporal* Eſtate thinks himſelf obliged to conſult an able *Lawyer* and to take his *Advice* and Counſel; and, in Caſe of a *bodily* Diſeaſe, every one as readily betakes himſelf to a ſkilful and experienced *Phyſician:* And is there not the ſame Reaſon, in *ſpiritual* Diſtempers, to engage a Man to conſult his *ghoſtly* Phyſician and Counſellor, who may be preſumed to be as learned and ſkilful in his Profeſſion, as either of the former? Could he indeed fly immediately and ſolely to God, *that* would be very well, had he

(*a*) *Bingham*'s Orig. Eccleſ. l. 19. c. 2. (*b*) Vid. firſt Exhort. to the Communion. (*c*) *Bingham* on *Abſolution*.

he ſufficient Faith, and Courage, and Confidence to approach him, but God is the Perſon, who he hath *chiefly* offended, and now he can think of nothing, but his Wrath and Indignation. Could he betake himſelf to the Son of God, the great *Interceſſor and Mediator between God and Man*, all would be right in this Caſe too: But this is his *Misfortune*, and no ſmall Part of his *Diſeaſe*, that he dares not come now ſo boldly to the *Throne* of *Grace*, or if he adventures to approach his Lord with Prayers and Tears, he is afraid that they will not be accepted, becauſe he can hardly look upon him as his *Saviour*, but much rather as his offended and incenſed *Judge*. In theſe Circumſtances, whom can he properly apply to, but to thoſe, whom God has ordained to this very Purpoſe, (*d*) *that they may watch over the Souls* of their Fellow-Creatures; whoſe *Studies* are in the Scriptures; whoſe Buſineſs it is to *explain* them, to *ſolve* his Doubts, and *take off* his Scruples; to *examine* his Repentance; to *compare* it for him with the *Rule* of God's Word; and if, upon ſuch Compariſon, they find him a real Penitent, to declare him abſolved by God, and inſtated in his Favour. All which muſt needs be of ſovereign Uſe to Perſons in ſuch a Condition, and afford them the ſureſt Relief, and the moſt ſolid Comfort and Satisfaction, that, without a *particular* Revelation, can be expected on this ſide Heaven.

THE ſhort of the Matter is, (*e*) though a *particular* Confeſſion of our Sins, with the ſeveral Circumſtances of them, is no where expreſly required in Scripture, yet, in ſuch Caſes, where Men cannot have Peace and Satisfaction without it, the very Deſire of Eaſe and Self-Enjoyment, one would think, ſhould engage and oblige them to it. For as the *Prieſt* is their proper ſpiritual Guide; as his Adminiſtrations are, upon that Account, ſuppoſed to be attended with a divine *Benediction*; as he is inveſted with a Power, upon their Repentance, *to remit Sins*; and as a *particular* Confeſſion is one good Evidence of a *ſincere* Repentance; it ſeems, upon the whole, to be the ſafeſt and moſt comfortable Method, they can take, in order to receive the ſtrongeſt Aſſurances of their being forgiven, only let them be ſure to join the *outward* and the *inward* Act together, to let the Repentance and Obedience of their Souls prepare the Way for the *Miniſtry* of the Prieſt, and then ſhall the Sins, which *he remits on Earth*, *be remitted in Heaven*, when Chriſt ſhall confirm the Word of his Servant, by his irreverſible Sentence of Abſolution, ſaying, (*f*) *Come, ye bleſſed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the Foundation of the World.*

The Recapitulation *of the whole.*

" THIS may ſuffice for the *Expoſition* of " the *tenth* Article, *the Forgiveneſs of Sins*; " wherein we profeſs to believe—that, " as Sin is a *Tranſgreſſion* of the Laws " of God, to which he hath annexed " the *Penalty* of eternal Death, every Sin- " ner, by violating theſe Laws, incurs a " *Guilt*, which binds him over to this " Puniſhment, from which no Releaſe " can be expected, but only from God " himſelf; that God, foreſeeing Mankind " would fall into Sin, and tranſgreſs his " Laws, out of his free Grace and Mercy, " and in Conſideration of his Son's of- " fering a Propitiation for their Sins, " made a *general Grant* of Pardon to " all Sinners, upon the *Conditions* of their " Faith in the Merits of Chriſt, and their " *Repentance from dead Works*; that up- " on the *Performance* of theſe Conditi- " ons all Sins, of what Kind ſoever, be " they never ſo many, never ſo heinous, " whether *before* or *after* Baptiſm, are " fully and abſolutely forgiven, for the " Sake of him, in whom *God is well* " *pleaſed*, and who, in his Church, hath " inſtituted two *Sacraments*, one at our " *Initiation*, and the other upon our *Con-* " *tinuation* in it, to be the *Means* and " *Inſtruments* of conveying this Forgive- " neſs to us; and that, upon a due Re- " ception of theſe *Sacraments*, by the " Power of *Abſolution* which God has " committed to his *Miniſters*, our own " *Prayers* and Penitence, and ſtedfaſt " *Reſolutions* of future Amendment, we " may reſt our Souls ſatisfied (whatever " anxious Apprehenſions may ſometimes " ariſe in our Breaſts) that we ſhall find " Mercy at the Hands of God, and, " (*g*) *though our Sins be as Scarlet, they* " *ſhall be as white as Snow*: And the " proper *Reſult* of all this is—a due *Ad-* " *miration* of God's unſpeakable Good- " neſs, in that *general Grant* of Pardon, " which he hath given us, and, by the

(*d*) Heb. xiii. 17. (*e*) *Fiddes*'s Body Vol. I. (*f*) Matt. xxv. 34. (*g*) Iſa. i. 18.

" Blood of his own Son, (*b*) in *open-*
" *ing a Fountain for Sin and for uncleanneſs*; *Love* and *Gratitude* to Chriſt,
" who, having (*i*) *by himſelf purged our* " *Sins*, by his Interceſſion perpetuates
" our Reconciliation with God; *truſt* in
" the divine Mercy, and a comfortable
" Aſſurance, that, being *juſtified by Faith,*
" *we have Peace with God through our*
" *Lord Jeſus Chriſt*; a *religious Uſe* of
" thoſe Sacraments, and devout *Atten-*
" *tion* to the publick Prayers, and Ad-
" miniſtrations, that God has made the
" *Seals* of Pardon, and the *Means* of
" conveying *Grace*; an *Engagement* to
" Obedience, and Perſeverance in our
" Duty, leſt, relapſing into Sin, *after*
" *we* (*k*) *have been made whole, a worſe*
" *Thing ſhould come upon us*; and, laſtly,
" a *Readineſs*, at all Times, to imitate
" the bleſſed Example, that our heaven-
" ly Father hath ſet us, in (*l*) *putting on*
" *Bowels of Mercy, being kind to one*
" *another, and tender-hearted; in forbear-*
" *ing one another, and forgiving one an-*
" *other, even as God for Chriſt's Sake*
" *has forgiven us.*"

(*b*) Zech. xiii. 1. (*i*) Heb. i. 3. (*k*) John. v. 14. (*l*) Eph. iv. 32. and Col. iii. 12, 13.

CHAP.

CHAP. XI.

ARTICLE XI.

* The Reſurrection † of the Body.

The EXPOSITION.

The Reſurrection, a Chriſtian *Doctrine,*

ANother *Privilege*, that we are made Partakers of by being admitted into the *Communion* of Chriſt's Church, is *the Reſurrection of the Body*, and a Privilege it is, that the *greateſt* Part of Mankind was unacquainted with, until the *full* and perfect Revelation of it in the Diſpenſation of the *Goſpel*.

Unknown to the Heathens,

(*a*) THAT the *Soul* ſhould ſurvive the *Diſſolution* of the Body, and, in a *future* State, be capable of receiving the *Rewards* and *Puniſhments* due to its good or evil Actions in *this*, was clearly enough deducible from the *Light* of Nature, and proved by undeniable Reaſons; but that the Body ſhould be again formed out of the Duſt, and *re-united* to the Soul, from which it had been ſeparated by Death; this was a Notion, that the greateſt *Philoſophers* among the *Heathens*, (*b*) by the very Principles they maintained, muſt have been Strangers to, and therefore, in all their Writings, we meet with no *Treatiſe*, nor ſo much as any direct *Mention* made of it. (*c*) *Socrates*, when he was to fortify himſelf under the Approach of Death, in his dying *Diſcourſes* with his Friends was ſo naturally led this Way, that he could not poſſibly have avoided the Subject, had it been any Part of his Knowledge; but whatever Hopes he might entertain of the Soul's *Immortality*, the Body, it is plain, he gave up for loſt, whenever it once returned to Corruption. *Plato* reaſons much concerning the *Immortality* of the Soul, but, by his not once mentioning the *riſing* of the Body after its Diſſolution (when he was treating of ſo *ſimilar* a Subject) we may reaſonably preſume, that he was utterly ignorant of it: And though *Seneca*, in one of his (*d*) Epiſtles, has

* The Author of the Hiſtory of the *Apoſtle*'s Creed thinks, that the Reſurrection of the Dead was always a Part of the Confeſſion of Faith from the *Beginning* of Chriſtianity, but others are of a different Opinion, becauſe the *catechetical* Diſcourſes of St. *Peter* and St. *Paul* conclude with the *Remiſſion of Sins*; nor did the latter, in his Sermon to the *Athenians*, mention *the Reſurrection of the Dead*, but only the Reſurrection of Jeſus, Acts xvii. 31. even as the reſt of the Apoſtles are ſaid, *with great Power, to give Teſtimony of the Reſurrection of the Lord Jeſus*, Acts iv. 33. The Reſurrection of *Jeſus* then was the Doctrine, which the Apoſtles *firſt* taught the *Catechumens* upon their Entrance into Chriſtianity: but, as ſoon as they found, that the *general* Reſurrection was oppoſed and diſputed, it is not to be doubted, but that they then inculcated *this* as a *Corollary* from the Reſurrection of Jeſus, for ſo we find St. *Paul* telling his *Theſſalonians*: *we would not, Brethren, that you ſhould be ignorant concerning thoſe, that ſleep, leſt you ſhould be troubled, as thoſe, that have no Hope. For if we believe that Jeſus is dead, and riſen again, ſo alſo thoſe, that ſleep in Jeſus, ſhall God bring with him*, 1 Theſſ. iv. 13, 14.

† Though St. *Paul*, in treating of the Subject of the Reſurrection, makes uſe of the Word *Body*, yet, in all ancient Creeds, both *Greek* and *Latin*, the Article is in theſe Terms, *the Reſurrection of the Fleſh*, and the Reaſon why the Word *Fleſh* was made choice of, rather than *Body*, was this——that, when ſeveral Perſons were found in the Church, who acknowledged the Reſurrection of *a* Body, but would not allow that the *ſame* Body, which we now have, ſhould be raiſed again, but, inſtead of that, imagined, that, at the Reſurrection, God, by his Power, would frame thin, ſubtile, and aerial Bodies, to which human Souls were to be united, in Oppoſition to theſe Mens Notions it was, that the *Fathers* of the primitive Church choſe to expreſs this Article by the *Reſurrection of the Fleſh*, and not of *the Body*, becauſe the latter Word was capable of more Evaſions and Subterfuges, than the other. How our *Tranſlators* of this Creed, inſtead of the Word *Fleſh*, came to make uſe of *Body*, which is a Term of much more Ambiguity, is ſomewhat unaccountable; but that the Church itſelf, by the Word Body means that Body, which conſiſts of Fleſh and Blood, is plain from her Form of *publick Baptiſm*, wherein, among other Queſtions propounded to the Sponſors in the Name of the Child, it is aſked, doſt *thou believe the Reſurrection of the Fleſh?* Crit. Hiſt. of the Creed, and *Pearſon*'s Expoſition.

(*a*) *Clarke*'s Ser. Vol. V. (*b*) Vid. *South*'s Ser. Vol. IV. (*c*) *Maynard*'s Ser. Vol. I. (*d*) Ep. 36.

has dropt an Expreſſion, *viz. that Death was only a Suſpenſion of Life, to which, in due Time, we ſhould be reſtored again*, yet * in *this* he only meant that *periodical Revolution* of ſo many thouſand Years, when, according to the *Stoick* Philoſophy, all Men, and all Things ſhould return to their former *State* and Condition here on Earth; which is a Notion widely different from that of the Body's returning from the Grave after its Diſſolution, and Converſion into Duſt.

The *Staicks* indeed were the *ſubtileſt* and moſt acute of all the Sects of *Philoſophers*, and yet, (*e*) when, at *Athens*, they heard St. *Paul* but barely *mention* the *riſing of the Dead*, *they mocked*, and ridiculed him; as indeed, at that Time, and long after, this *fundamental* Article of our Faith was made the ſtanding *Jeſt*, and common *Banter* of all the *Wits* of the Age, that ſet themſelves upon Oppoſition to the *Chriſtian* Faith. The firſt *Preachers*, and ancient *Fathers* of the Church, who had much dealing with the *Heathens* about this Argument, endeavour, we find, to convince them by fit *Alluſions* and Compariſons. (*f*) They tell them, that *Sleep* is an appoſite Image of *Death*, and *waking* again an Emblem of *riſing* from the dead; that the *ſetting* of the Sun anſwers to our being *buried* in the Grave, and its *riſing* again reſembles our *Reſurrection*, even as the *diurnal Revolution* of Light and Darkneſs are lively *Repreſentations* of our Death, and returning to Life again: But all this would not do, though they perceived very well the *Likeneſs* there is between Death and Sleep; though they obſerved the *Viciſſitudes* of Day and Night, and were not inſenſible of the *Analogy* they had to *Life* and *Death*, yet ſo far were they from making the Inference of a Reſurrection from all this, that, on the contrary, we find the ſobereſt of them all complaining, that, though the Sun ſet and roſe again, though they ſlept and awaked out of Sleep, yet, when the Day of Life was once at an End, they were thenceforth to ſleep for one long, perpetual, and eternal Night. So little Knowledge had the *heathen* World of the future Fate, and Reſurrection of their Bodies!

The *Jews* indeed had Intimations given them of this *Myſtery* (as (*g*) our Saviour proves) even in the Books of *Moſes*; but the Force of the Argument lay ſo remote, behind ſuch a Train of Conſequences, that, till it was pointed out to them, they took ſo little Notice of it, that a great, a learned, and conſiderable Sect among them, called the *Sadducees*, (*h*) wholly diſcarded this *Article* from their Creed. The Reſurrection of the Dead however appears in other Paſſages of the *Old Teſtament*, and particularly in the Writings of the Prophets, where we ſometimes meet with full Declarations, and *graphical* Deſcriptions of it; but theſe Things the *Jews* were wont to apply, either to ſome *temporal Deliverance* from the *Perſecutions*, or ſome expected *Reſtoration* from the *Captivity*, they laboured under, and ſo † regarded not the hidden and religious Senſe of them; and though, in ſome Places, this Doctrine is delivered in expreſs Terms, yet is there ſuch a Mixture of Paſſages of a *ſuſpicious* Meaning, even delivered by the *Pen* of the ſame Author, as

Partially *believed by the* Jews.

* This appears from his other Writings, particularly his fifty fourth Epiſtle, where, by ſome violent *aſthmatick* Fits being almoſt brought to Death's Door, he is quite off from that *Strain*, and finds out another very different *Topick*, wherewith to ſupport him; *viz.* "that he knew the worſt of Death al-"ready, it could only reduce him to his *primitive* State; that, as before his Birth, he was nothing, "ſo after his Death he ſhould be no more. For Death, ſays he in his *Conſolation to Marcia*, repoſes "us in that Tranquillity, wherein we lay, before we were born, *Maynard's* Ser. Vol. I.

† Thus, in *Ezekiel's* Viſion, *O ye dry Bones, hear the Word of the Lord; I will lay Sinews upon you, and will bring up Fleſh upon you, and put Breath into you, and ye ſhall live*, &c. Though theſe, and the following Words are a plain Deſcription both of the Reſurrection, and the Manner of it; yet, as the Viſion happened in the Time of the *Babyloniſh* Captivity, which was a Kind of *political* Death to the *Jews*, no other Interpretation was thought on, than their Deliverance from that Yoke, and their Reſtoration to their own Land: and in like Manner, the Prophecy of *Daniel*, *many of them who ſleep in the Duſt, ſhall awake*, which St. *Auſtin* (de civit. Dei Lib. 20.) looks upon as a *Counterpart* to theſe Words of our Saviour, *all, that are in the Grave, ſhall come forth*, and are indeed a manifeſt Promiſe of the Reſurrection, yet, being uttered in the Time, when the *Jews* were ſorely oppreſſed by the Tyranny of *Antiochus*, they were thought only to relate to their Deliverance out of that miſerable Eſtate; and thus both the *Viſion* and *Prophecy*, how expreſſive ſoever of a Reſurrection, were overlooked in that Senſe; and as they were ſuppoſed to contain a Promiſe of *temporal Deliverance*, that Interpretation was more open to the View, and therefore chiefly regarded. *Maynard's* Ser.

(*e*) Acts xvii. 31. (*f*) Bp. *Smalridge's* Ser. (*g*) Exod. iii. 6. and Matt. xxii. 31, 32. (*h*) Ver. 23.

as ſeems to *deſtroy* the Validity of what he might otherwiſe be thought to eſtabliſh. Thus, when we find *Job* affirming, that, (*i*) *though after his Skin, Worms deſtroy his Body, yet in his Fleſh ſhould he ſee God, though his Reins were conſumed within him*; we cannot reaſonably doubt of his firm and ſtedfaſt Belief of a Reſurrection; and yet, when the ſame *Job* declares, (*k*) that *his Days are ſpent without Hope, and that as the Cloud is conſumed, and vaniſheth away, ſo he, that goeth down to the Grave, ſhall come up no more:* Theſe ſeemingly *deſperate* Expreſſions were enough to ſtagger a *Jew*'s Faith concerning the Certainty of a future Reſurrection, ſo far as it was built upon *Job*'s Teſtimony: And, in like Manner, when holy *David* puts theſe Queſtions to his Maker, (*l*) *What Profit is there in my Blood, when I go down to the Pit? Shall the Duſt give Thanks unto thee?* (*m*) *Shall thy Wonders be known in the Dark, and thy Righteouſneſs in the Land of Forgetfulneſs?* And when he ſeems to anſwer theſe Queſtions in the negative, (*n*) *the dead praiſe not the Lord*, neither any, that go down into Silence, for (*o*) *Man is as a Wind, which paſſeth away, and cometh not again*; even as when the *Royal* Preacher obſerves, that (*p*) *the dead know not any Thing, neither have they any more Reward, for the Memory of them is forgotten*; though both theſe Authors were fully convinced, and have made (*q*) ample Declarations of the Truth of a Reſurrection, and future Judgment, yet a *carnally-minded Jew* might diſtort their Words to a Diſbelief of both theſe Points, and alledge them in Proof of a total *Extinction* or utter *Annihilation* after Death. So obſcurely revealed, or ſo little regarded was the Doctrine of the Reſurrection among the *Jews*, that in our Saviour's Time we find a conſiderable Diviſion of them utterly denying it, and even to this Day (as (*r*) one well acquainted with their Tenets informs us) "there are not a few "who are fully perſuaded, that only the "Juſt ſhall be made Partakers of it, but "that the Wicked ſhall ſink into everlaſting "Oblivion, and both Body and Soul go "together, never to appear any more. "But to ſhew the little Ground there is "for any ſuch Perſuaſion, we come now "to enquire into the *Scripture Evidences* "concerning this important Doctrine."

But proved both from the Old,

THE Paſſage, which our Lord produces in Confutation of the Error of the *Sadducees*, is that Declaration, which God makes of himſelf, (*s*) *I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Iſaac, and the God of Jacob*; from whence he infers, that, as (*t*) *he is not the God of the dead*, of thoſe who are to continue in a State of Death, *but of the living*, he would infallibly raiſe them, and in Conſequence all others to Life again: *For* (*u*) *all live unto him*, as he ſays in another Place; to him are all Things preſent; and therefore he, having determined the Reſurrection, looks upon the dead as already raiſed, and now living, which he plainly intimates by calling himſelf *their God:* (*x*) But now, if the dead ſhould not riſe again, they could not *live to him*, for then they would never live again at all, and ſo be utterly incapable of having *God to be their God*. So that the Reſult of the Argument is——that God, by profeſſing himſelf to be the *God* of theſe Patriarchs, evidently declared that he would raiſe them up from the dead.

IT is a juſt Obſervation therefore, which our Saviour makes upon the unbelieving *Sadducees*, *viz.* that (*y*) their Error in this Regard proceeded from their *Ignorance of the Scriptures*; for, when we read in the * *Royal Pſalmiſt*, (*z*) *thou wilt not leave my Soul in Hell*, or in a State of Death (as it ſhould be rendered) *nor ſuffer thy holy*

* Though theſe Words are applied by St. *Peter* to Chriſt, and *his riſing from the dead*, Acts ii. 31. yet is there no Doubt to be made, but that *David* ſpoke them of himſelf *primarily*, and thereby teſtified his Truſt in God, to be retrieved from the Grave, and, after that, both in Soul and Body to be advanced to endleſs Life and Glory, as the Verſe following declares, *thou wilt ſhew me the Path of Life*, &c. Pſal. xvi. 11. Nor is it improbable, that thoſe Words of the ſame holy King (Pſal. xxxiv. 20.) refer to the Reſurrection of the Body: For, having recounted ſeveral Privileges entailed upon the righteous Man, he adds, that *God keepeth all his Bones, and not one of them is broken*; where the plain Senſe ſeems to be——that none of the Bones, or any other Parts of the Body, ſhall totally periſh, but, being now under the Care and Cuſtody of God, at the laſt Day, ſhall every one of them be reſtored, ſo that the Body ſhall not be deficient in any, the leaſt Member, or Part whatever. *Edwards*'s Body Vol. II.

(*i*) Job xix. 26, &c. (*k*) Job vii. 6, 9. (*l*) Pſ. xxx. 9. (*m*) Pſ. lxxxviii. 10, 12. (*n*) Pſ. cxv. 17. (*o*) Pſ. lxxviii. 39. (*p*) Eccleſ. ix. 5. (*q*) Pſ. xvii. 15. and Eccleſ. xii. 7, 14. (*r*) *Buxtorf* Syn. Jud. (*s*) Exod. iii. 6. (*t*) Matt. xxii. 32. (*u*) Luke xx. 38. (*x*) Bp. *Beveridge*'s Expo. of the Ch. Cat. (*y*) Matt. xxii. 29. (*z*) Pſ. xvi. 10.

One to ſee Corruption; in the Prophet *Iſaiah*, (*a*) *thy dead Men ſhall live, together with my dead Body ſhall they ariſe, awake, and ſing, ye that dwell in the Duſt, for the Earth ſhall caſt out her dead*; in the Prophet *Hoſea*, (*b*) *I will ranſom them from the Power of the Grave. I will redeem them from Death: O Death, I will be thy Plague, O Grave, I will be thy Deſtruction*; and, to mention no more, in the Prophet *Daniel*, (*c*) *they that ſleep in the Duſt ſhall awake, ſome to everlaſting Life, and ſome to Shame and everlaſting Contempt*; which Words have a great Affinity to thoſe of our bleſſed Saviour, (*d*) *all, that are in their Graves, ſhall hear* my *Voice*, and *ſhall come forth, they, that have done good, to the Reſurrection of Life, and they, that have done evil, unto the Reſurrection of Damnation*: When we read theſe, I ſay, and many ſuch Declarations of a general Reſurrection in thoſe ſacred *Records*, which were delivered to the *Jews*, we cannot but perceive the Reaſonableneſs of the Apoſtle's putting this Queſtion to them, (*e*) *why ſhould it be thought a Thing incredible with you*, with you, who are *Jews*, and believe the Scriptures, and are daily converſant in thoſe Books, wherein this Doctrine is contained, why *with you* ſhould it be *a Thing incredible, that God ſhould raiſe the dead?*

And New *Teſtament.*

BUT, after all, the clear Evidence, and infallible Certainty of this Doctrine is chiefly to be ſought for in the Writings of the *New Teſtament*, wherein we find it not only expreſsly revealed, but plainly demonſtrated in the great Example of Chriſt's own Reſurrection: For this is the Thread of the Apoſtle's Reaſoning.——(*f*) *Now if Chriſt be preached that he roſe from the dead, how ſay ſome among you that there is no Reſurrection?* If we are all agreed that Chriſt is riſen, what Reaſon can any Man have to doubt of a general Reſurrection? *But if there be no Reſurrection of the dead, then is Chriſt not riſen, and, if Chriſt be not riſen, then is our Preaching vain, and your Faith is vain——but now is Chriſt riſen from the dead, and become the Firſt-fruits of them that ſlept*, the Force of which Argument is plainly this——"If there be no Reſurrection of "the dead, then is that Doctrine, which "the Apoſtles preach concerning it, erro- "neous and falſe; and if that Doctrine be "falſe, then the Reſurrection of Chriſt, "which is urged as a Proof of it, muſt be "likewiſe falſe. But now, if the Reſur- "rection of Chriſt be true (as (*g*) that "had been proved by *a Cloud of Witneſ- "ſes*) then muſt the Apoſtle's Doctrine "concerning the general Reſurrection, "whereof Chriſt's is an Evidence, be "equally true; and if the Apoſtles Preach- "ing, and the Promiſes made in the Go- "ſpel, be true, then ſhall the dead cer- "tainly riſe again." And indeed, conſidering that (*h*) *Chriſt*, both in dying, and riſing from the dead, acted as our *Head*, and Repreſentative, we may juſtly conclude, that, as, when he lay down his Life, he laid it down for *ours*, ſo, when he took it up again, he took ours with it; and, conſequently, that he *virtually* raiſed us by the ſame *Spirit*, whereby he *actually* raiſed himſelf: So that we are already riſen in our *Cauſes*, ſince our *Head* is riſen, and has the ſame Power to raiſe us, that he had to raiſe himſelf: For *he is the Firſt-fruits of them that ſlept*, and, as the *Firſt-fruits* under the Law, though in themſelves but a ſingle *Sheaf*, or handful, was the *Earneſt* of a complete Harveſt, ſo the Reſurrection of our Saviour is, in like Manner, a ſure *Pledge* of the Reſurrection of the whole Race of Mankind.

As likewiſe its Univerſality.

ST. *Paul*, in this famous Chapter to the *Corinthians*, arguing from Chriſt's Reſurrection to *ours*, acquaints us, that our Saviour, the *ſecond Adam*, was to repair the Loſs and Ruin, that the *firſt Adam*'s Tranſgreſſion had brought upon our Nature, and to reſcue from Death as *many*, as his Diſobedience had made ſubject to it, for (*i*) *ſince by Man came Death*, ſays he, *by Man came alſo the Reſurrection of the dead*; and, *as in Adam all die, even ſo in Chriſt ſhall all be made alive*; and towards the Concluſion of his Diſcourſe, exempts none from the Reſurrection, but only ſuch, as ſhould be found *alive* at Chriſt's *ſecond coming*, and who were to eſcape the Stroke of Death by a (*k*) ſudden *Change*, which ſhould paſs upon them *in a Moment, in the Twinkling of an Eye, at the laſt Trump*: And our Saviour, in treating of this Subject,

(*a*) Iſa. xxvi. 19. (*b*) Hoſ. xiii. 14. (*c*) Dan. xii. 2. (*d*) John v. 28, 29.
(*e*) Acts xxvi. 8. (*f*) 1 Cor. xv. 12, &c. (*g*) Ver. 5, &c. (*h*) *Scot*'s Mediator.
(*i*) 1 Cor. xv. 21, 22. (*k*) Ver. 51, 52.

ject, has ſufficiently eſtabliſhed the *Univerſality* of this Reſurrection, by telling us, that (*l*) *all, who are in their Graves, ſhall hear his Voice, and come forth,* when (according to St. *Paul*) (*m*) *there ſhall be a Reſurrection both of the juſt and unjuſt*; for, if (*n*) *we muſt all appear before the Judgment-Seat of Chriſt, that every one may receive the Things done in his Body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good, or bad,* then muſt every one, good and bad alike, be reſtored to Life again, in order to make them capable of ſuch Judgment; and therefore (*o*) *I ſaw the dead,* ſaith St. *John* in his prohetick *Viſion, both ſmall and great, ſtand before God —— the Sea gave up the Dead which were in it; and Death and the Grave delivered up the dead, which were in them*; from every Quarter of the World, and out of every Repoſitory of their Aſhes and Remains, the dead came, and *were judged every Man according to their Works.*

From ſeveral Reaſons.

AND indeed conſidering the Providence of a juſt and righteous God, what can be more proper to be believed, than that Man, in another Life, ſhall enjoy ſuch *Bliſs*, or ſuffer ſuch *Torments*, as are proportionate to the *Merit* or *Demerit* of his Actions *here*, and that, not in Reſpect to his *Soul* only, becauſe the Laws, which were given for the Conduct of his Actions, do not relate to the Soul *alone*, but have equally frequent Reflection upon the Body. Though therefore we ſhould allow (as ſome maintain) that the Body is properly the *Inſtrument* of Senſation to the Soul, but in itſelf incapable of *any*, and, conſequently not the Subject of Rewards or Puniſhments; (*p*) yet it muſt be acknowledged, that the Soul may be capable of more Happineſs or Miſery, when *reunited* to the Body, than in a State of *Separation* from it. For, beſides its Anguiſh or Peace of Mind, its own Reflections, and proper Operations, independent on the Body, it is certain, that it is liable to be affected with ſuch *Senſations*, as ariſe from its Union with the Body: For, if upon Mens virtuous or vicious Actions and Habits in this Life the *Diſpoſition* of the Body, in a great Meaſure, depends, it cannot well otherwiſe be, but that a Body of vicious Practices and Cuſtoms, prone to raging and furious Paſſions, inſatiable Appetites, and tormenting Deſires (without any Thing to gratify or aſſwage them) muſt have a quite different Effect upon the Soul, than a Body ſubdued to the mild, and calm, and obedient Temper of Religion, and Virtue. However this be, (*q*) ſince no true Philoſophy will allow, that the Body was ever intended merely for a *Garment* to the Soul, but for an eſſential conſtituent Part of Man, it is highly requiſite, that, whether it has been (*r*) *an Inſtrument of Unrighteouſneſs unto Sin, or of Righteouſneſs unto God*, in the Meaſure, that it hath contributed to the Performance or Violation of his Laws, it ſhould be made Partaker of the happy or unhappy Conſequences thereof.

(*s*) ACCORDING to Man's original Deſign and Make, his Soul and Body have a *natural* Relation and *Aptitude* to cohabit, and co-operate with each other. Many *Actions*, proper to his Nature, cannot be performed without their Commiſſion and Concurrence. Many *Capacities* of Joy and Comfort (as well as contrary Paſſions and Affections) reſult from their Union. Their Separation, we ſee, how violent and repugnant it is to Nature; and, as we are taught that it is the Reſult of Sin and Diſobedience (and, upon that Account, cannot be good) we have Reaſon to conclude; that whatever Diſorder, in Conſequence of Man's Tranſgreſſion, may at preſent happen to this Work, which his Fingers have framed, God will, at length, amply repair it, by raiſing the Body *incorruptible*, and re-joining it to the Soul, that ſo they may both live together, not as they have done here for a momentary Continuance, but for a Length of Time, that will never be expended.

THE longeſt Life here, we muſt own, is but ſhort. (*t*) In Point of *Duration* many *Beaſts* of the Field, and *Fowls* of the Air, and *Fiſhes* of the Sea; as well as *Plants* of the Earth, do exceed Man, and yet he is called the Lord of all; and can we think, that Creatures of a Nature ſo much inferior ſhould be furniſhed with ſuch *laſting* Bodies, and our Spirits joined to Fleſh, ſo ſubject to Corruption, ſo ſuddenly diſſolvable, if we finally periſh when we die, and ſo go Soul and Body to Deſtruction, never to return again to the ſame Sub-

(*l*) John v. 28, 29. (*m*) Acts xxiv. 15. (*n*) 2 Cor. v. 10. (*o*) Rev. xx. 12, 13. (*p*) *Jenkins*'s Reaſon. Vol. II. (*q*) *South*'s Ser. Vol. IV. (*r*) Rom. vi. 13. (*s*) *Barrow* on the Creed Vol. I. (*t*) *Pearſon* on the Creed.

Subſiſtence? (*u*) *Lord! what is Man*, ſays the *Pſalmiſt*, *that thou art ſo mindful of him, and the Son of Man that thou viſiteſt him? Thou makeſt him to have Dominion over the Works of thy Hands, and haſt put all Things under his Feet:* But what availeth all this to his real Comfort, if (*x*) *his Days*, at the moſt, are but *a Span long*, and, at the beſt, ſo *full of Miſery*; if *here he walketh in a vain Shadow, and diſquieteth himſelf in vain*, and after this ſhort *Scene* is ſhifted, muſt (*y*) *lie down in the Duſt, and the Worms cover him*, without any Proſpect beyond the Grave, or any Hopes of a Reſtoration from it: If this be his *Lot* and his *Portion*, I ſay, we may juſtly pronounce him, of all God's Creatures, the moſt compleatly miſerable, nor can we imagine, why the *Almighty* ſhould buſy himſelf, and take Delight, as it were, in raiſing a Multitude of *Bubbles*, and then with the Blaſt of the Breath of his Diſpleaſure breaking them again, or (what is much the ſame) in ſending ſo many Generations ſucceſſively into the World, if all their Buſineſs is, after a ſhort Life ſpent in Vanity, *to* (*z*) *make the Grave their Houſe* for ever, *and to ſay to Corruption, thou art my Father, and to the Worm, thou art my Mother, and my Siſter.* But now, upon a different Suppoſition, that, when we die, (*a*) *our Bodies are committed to the Ground in ſure and certain Hope of a Reſurrection to eternal Life*; that, though they are diſſolved into Duſt, and mixed with the common Maſs of Matter, yet, by the mighty Power of God, they ſhall be recollected, and (*b*) *faſhioned like unto Chriſt's glorious Body*; God's ſending us into this World, continuing us here but a ſhort while, and then removing us into another State; ſuffering Death to *paſs upon all*, foraſmuch as *all have ſinned*, but, in our State of Separation, taking our *Souls* under his Protection, and depoſiting our *Bodies* in Chambers of *Reſt*, which, after they have taken a Sort of Repoſe, he will awake, and raiſe, and refine, and reunite to their proper Souls, and, in this *Conjunction*, make them live as long, as he himſelf ſhall endure: Under this View, I ſay, God's dealing with Mankind is a Diſpenſation full of Wiſdom, and Power, and Juſtice, and Mercy. Our Condition here, be it never ſo afflictive, with this Proſpect becomes tolerable; the Terrors of Death are diſarmed, our Departure hence is a Matter of Joy; and our Sorrow for thoſe, that *ſleep in the Lord*, unſeaſonable, ſince thus (*c*) *to die is Gain.*

THUS does the Voice of *Reaſon* confirm the Teſtimony of *Scripture* concerning the Doctrine of a general Reſurrection. And indeed conſidering, that the Body is not only the *Manſion* of an immortal Soul, but itſelf likewiſe a curious Piece of Artifice, *fearfully and wonderfully made*, the excellent Contrivance of divine Omniſcience, there was all along good Reaſon to hope, that, however now it might appear in a ruinous Condition, a Time would come, when it was to be rebuilt. This ſeems to have ſuggeſted the Cuſtom in moſt Nations, of *enſhrining* the *Remains* of their deceaſed Friends * in ſtately *Tombs* and Sepulchres, and of giving the like Orders concerning their own. This certainly was the Reaſon, (*d*) that Chriſtians abhorred the Practice, (which prevailed among ſome Heathens) of *burning* their dead, not that it made their Reſurrection more difficult (as their Enemies ſuppoſed) but becauſe they looked upon it as a ſavage and inhumane Cuſtom: And for this Reaſon, though, while they lived, they generally abſtained from what was curious and coſtly, yet, when they were dead, they ſpared no Expence, but prepared the Body for its Funeral with coſtly

Particularly the Cuſtom of embalming the dead.

* To this Purpoſe we might take Notice of the *Egyptian Pyramids*, which were not built by the *Patriarch Joſeph*, to be Granaries, or Storehouſes for Corn, as ſome vainly imagined, but (as *Joſephus* acquaints us) by the *Egyptian* Kings, or rather by the *Iſraelites*, who were compelled to this Work and Drudgery under the oppreſſive Reigns of thoſe Kings, who deſigned theſe mighty Structures to be Sepulchres and Monuments for the dead, in which the Reliques of their Kings, and of the greateſt Perſonages among them, were depoſited. "For the *Egyptians*, (as an ancient Hiſtorian tells us,) reckon the Term of this Life to be very "ſoon ended, and therefore prize it but little; but they have a great Regard for that *State*, which, after this "Life, will be memorable and glorious for Virtue. They therefore call the *Houſes* of the living INNS, be-"cauſe we inhabit in theſe but a ſhort Time; but the *Sepulchres* of the dead they *call everlaſting Manſion-*"*Houſes*, becauſe, in that State of the deceaſed, we ſhall ſpend infinite Ages. For this Reaſon they are "the leſs ſollicitous about the Structure of their *Habitations*, but they omit no Care or Study, nor any Coſt, "in the Proviſion they make for their *Sepulchres*. Diod. Sic. Lib. 1.

(*u*) Pſal. viii. 4, 6. (*x*) Pſal. xxxix. 5, 6. (*y*) Job xxi. 26. (*z*) Job. xvii. 13, 14.
(*a*) Vid. the *Burial* Office. (*b*) Phil. iii. 21. (*c*) Phil. i. 21. (*d*) *Cave*'s Prim. Chriſt.

coſtly Spices and Ointments, and *ſpent more Odors and Perfumes on their Burials* (as (*e*) *Tertullian* tells us) *than the Heathens uſed in the Incenſe, they offered to their Gods*; becauſe they looked upon Death as an *Entrance* into a better Life, and laip up the Body as the *Candidate* and Expectant of a joyful and happy Reſurrection, notwithſtanding they were very ſenſible, that many Ages were to intervene, before it was to come to paſs, for *this* (*f*) *is the Will of him that ſent me*, ſays our Lord, *that every one, who ſeeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlaſting Life; and I will raiſe him up at the laſt Day*, which is always meant, *of the End of the World.*

And the Time *when it ſhall come to paſs.*

SOME indeed have imagined, that, for a conſiderable Time, before the general Reſurrection, there will be ſome Perſons, who in this Life had given extraordinary Proofs of their Zeal and Piety, whom our Saviour will particularly diſtinguiſh, by reſtoring them to Life, and to a State of Life, abounding with an Affluence of all the *innocent* Pleaſures, and Advantages, that this World can be ſuppoſed to afford: But, beſides that this Notion is taken from a Paſſage in a Book full of *Allegories* and *metaphorical* Expreſſions, and muſt therefore not be interpreted *literally*, when it is found repugnant to other expreſs Declarations in Scripture; in the Viſion it is ſaid, not that (*g*) St. *John ſaw* the Bodies, but only the *Souls of them, who were beheaded for the Teſtimony of Jeſus*, which Words may be ſo expounded, as to relate to that *Glory*, wherewith the *Martyrs* ſhall, in ſome diſtinguiſhing Manner, be crowned in Heaven, as a preſent Reward for their Conſtancy and Fortitude, even a *thouſand Years*, or ſome conſiderable Time before the general Judgment. However this be, the Scripture abounds with ſuch Declarations as theſe——That our bleſſed Lord, who is now at the right Hand of God, and appointed Judge of all Mankind, ſhall continue in Heaven, (*h*) *until the Times of the Reſtitution*, or final Completion, and Conſummation *of all Things*; that when this Period comes, (*i*) *he will deſcend from Heaven with a Shout, with the Voice of the Archangel, and with the Trump of God*, by the *ſounding* of which (*k*) *the Dead ſhall be raiſed*, and the *living changed*; and that thereupon they ſhall all be ſummoned to appear before the dread Tribunal, where the Proceſs immediately begins, (*l*) *the Books are opened, and the Dead of every Nation are judged out of the Things, that are written in the Books.* And therefore, ſince the *Connection* between the Reſurrection and the laſt Judgment is ſo cloſe, both commencing at the ſame *Time*, and both deſigned for the ſame *End*, (*m*) to diſtinguiſh for ever the wicked from the godly; as the laſt Judgment will *confeſſedly* be *univerſal*, we have ſufficient Reaſon to believe, that the Reſurrection will be ſo likewiſe, and that, in one and the ſame Day (as nothing is impoſſible to the Power of God) the whole Affair of both will be tranſacted, and concluded.

The OBJECTION.

" BUT, whatever we may think of
" the *univerſal Judgment*, in the
" Doctrine of the Reſurrection there ſeems
" to be ſomething highly *improbable*, and
" (as it implies a plain *Contradiction*)
" *impoſſible*, we may ſay, even for
" God himſelf to effect (*n*). That an
" human Body, diſſolved and crumbled
" into Duſt, without any Trace or Fea-
" ture of the *Form*, wherein it once ap-
" peared, when all its Lineaments are de-
" ſtroyed, and the whole Maſs of its Ma-
" terials, Bones, and Blood, and Sinews,
" mixed together in an *undiſtinguiſhable*
" Confuſion; that ſuch a Diſorder, I ſay,
" as this, ſhould ever be retrieved, and the
" blended Maſs reſume its former *Symmetry*
" and Proportions; this is ſuch an Effect,
" as our moſt refined Speculations can
" hardly conceive: But when we conſider
" farther, that theſe blended Materials are
" not only *confuſed* among themſelves,
" but *ſcattered* and diſperſed over the
" whole Face of Nature, (*o*) ſome eva-
" porated into *Air*, others diluted into
" *Water*, others ſublimated into *Fire*, and

(*e*) Apol. Lib. 42. (*f*) John vi. 38, &c. (*g*) Rev. xx. 4. (*h*) Acts iii. 21.
(*i*) 1 Theſſ. iv. 16. (*k*) 1 Cor. xv. 52. (*l*) Rev. xx. 12. (*m*) Matt. xxv. 32.
(*n*) *Rogers*'s Poſth. Ser. (*o*) *South*'s Ser. Vol. IV.

" all undergone a vaſt Variety of *Tranſmu-*
" *tations*, how can we think, that the
" *Elements* ſhould, after all this, ſurrender
" back their Spoils, and the ſeveral Parts
" leave the *Places*, where they abide, and,
" from the *four Quarters* of the World,
" travel to meet together, and to place
" themſelves in their old *Vicinity?* But,
" admitting this to be *poſſible*, yet how
" ſhall any be able to diſcern an *human*
" Particle, *diſguiſed* perhaps now under
" the Appearance of Air, or Water, of
" a Plant or Mineral, and when diſco-
" vered, to ſet it free from the other Parts
" of Matter, wherewith it is united, and ſo
" *remanded* to the Place it once poſſeſſed?
" But (what increaſes the Difficulty) when
" this human Body is not only diſſolved,
" diſperſed, and diſguiſed, but devoured
" by Fiſh or Beaſt, and ſo entered into the
" *Conſtitution* of another Animal, nay,
" and perhaps, in ſome Periods of the
" *Revolutions*, it undergoes, become the
" Food and Fleſh of another *Man*, what
" ſhall we ſay to it then, or whoſe *ſhall*
" *it be at the Reſurrection?* And yet far-
" ther ſtill, when Men *eat* Men, or feed
" altogether on human Fleſh (as ſome af-
" firm that the *Cannibals* do) how can it
" be practicable, even for *Omnipotence* it-
" ſelf, to raiſe the Bodies, both of the
" *Devourer* and Devoured, perfect and en-
" tire, ſince, upon this Suppoſition, (*p*) the
" ſame *Portion* of Subſtance or Matter
" muſt be a Part of ſeveral diſtinct *Bo-*
" *dies*, and, conſequently, be in ſeveral
" diſtinct *Places* at the ſame Time, which
" is abſolutely impoſſible. Inſtead of load-
" ing this Doctrine then with ſuch a Mul-
" titude of inſurmountable *Difficulties*, is
" it not much eaſier to ſay —— either
" that the Paſſages, uſually alledged from
" Scripture, relate properly to our ſpiritual
" Reſurrection, or, inſtead of perplexing
" himſelf with our confuſed Duſt and
" Aſhes, *ſince Fleſh and Blood cannot inhe-*
" *rit the Kingdom of God*, that he, at the
" Time of our Reſurrection, will give
" us at once ſuch new *ætherial Bodies*,
" as will beſt accord with the *lively*, vigo-
" rous Nature of our *glorified* Souls."

Anſwered, by ſhewing the Poſſibility of the Reſurrection from God's infinite Knowledge,

NOTHING can have a more pernicious *Influence* on our Faith, than undue Apprehenſions of the divine *Attributes*, and an Inclination, more eſpecially, to think of God, that he *is altogether ſuch an one, as ourſelves*. We find that ourſelves are *limited* and confined to a certain *Diſtance* in our Perception of Things, and to a certain *Meaſure* of Strength in our *Operations*; and, conſequently, that a Multitude of *Objects* or Buſineſs is apt to create in us *Wearineſs*, or Diſtraction. But now we have no proper Notion of God, unleſs we conceive of him, as an *omniſcient* and *omnipotent* Being, able to *know* all Things, be they never ſo *diſtant*, or ſecreted, and able to *perform* all Things, be they never ſo *difficult* and perplexed, with the ſame Facility, as if there were but *one*, and that the moſt *obvious*, to be done; for as (*q*) *the Eyes of the Lord run to and fro in the whole Earth*, and can behold every *individual* in it at one ſingle Intuition, ſo by the ſame almighty Power, whereby (*r*) *he made the Heaven and the Earth, nothing can be too hard for him.*

IN the rude *primordial* Maſs, wherein Matter lay much more blended and confuſed, than it can be ſuppoſed to do in this *orderly Syſtem* of Things, he ſaw at once every Particle of it, that was proper for his Work of *Creation*, what fitteſt, to compoſe the *Splendor* of heavenly Bodies, the *Denſity* of the Planets, the *Serenity* of the Air, the *Stability* of the Earth, the *Fluidity* of the Waters, and the Formation of the many different Creatures, that do ſtock and adorn them; and how can we think, but that the ſame *Knowledge*, which, in this immenſe *Heap* of Confuſion, could diſtinguiſh, and ſegregate the *Principles* of ſo many Kinds and Species of Beings, can do the ſame, in regard to the particular *Materials*, that did once compoſe each human Body? For (*s*) what ſhould hinder him, who *numbers the Stars of the Heavens, the Sands of the Sea*, and the *very Hairs of our Heads*, from keeping an exact Account of all our ſcattered Particles, and from knowing what Duſt belongs to every Body, and what Body to every Soul?

THE *Pſalmiſt* ſpeaks of a (*t*) *Book* in God's keeping, wherein *all our Members are written*; and, for the ſame Reaſon, we may ſuppoſe, that he has a Book too, wherein all the ſeveral Parts of them, when diſſolved, and diſperſed over the whole Univerſe,

(*p*) *South*'s Ser. Vol. IV. (*q*) 2 Chron. xvi. 9. (*r*) Jer. xxxii. 17. (*s*) *Scot*'s Mediator.
(*t*) Pſ. cxxxix. 16.

Univerſe, are carefully entered; but, in both *Caſes*, this can only be the immenſe Volume of his Omniſcience; (*u*) wherewith he *traces* every Duſt and Atom of our Subſtance, through all its *Maze* of Forms, and is able to diſtinguiſh, and reſcue them from all their *Diſguiſes* of Corruption. Loſt and inſenſible, as they are to us, to his all-ſeeing Eye they are ſo many *diſtinct Beings*, in a fair and regular Order; and though they run through all the Variety of Bodies in Nature, Earth or Water, Plants or Animals, yet they paſs their ſeveral *Stages* by his immediate Commiſſion and Appointment; are all along attended with his Care and Cognizance; and, whenever he pleaſes to give the Word, *awake, thou that ſleepeſt, and ariſe from the dead*, all the Elements will hear and obey his Voice, and render up every Part, that belongs to every human Body.

And Power,

We acknowledge indeed, that the Power of God cannot perform any Thing that neceſſarily implies a *Contradiction*, but this certainly is no Contradiction, that the *ſame* Thing, which once *was*, ſhould exiſt again, or that thoſe *Particles* of Matter, which were once *united* in an human Body, ſhould be reſtored to the ſame Union again. (*x*) Thoſe, who are moſt inclined to diſpute this *Article*, do nevertheleſs agree, that Matter is *unperiſhable* in itſelf, and that all the Deſtruction, it can undergo, is no more than its *paſſing* from one *Form* to another. The Matter therefore, that once conſtituted the Body, muſt neceſſarily remain: And, ſince Matter, as ſuch, is *equally* capable of all Forms, thoſe *Particles*, which before belonged to an human Body, muſt, at *leaſt*, be as capable, as any other, of being raiſed, and re-united into the ſame *Figure* again: And, if they are capable of ſuch *Re-union*, that God is able to effect it, cannot be denied, becauſe he has *actually* done it before. (*y*) The *Duſt*, whereof he compoſed our firſt *Parent*'s Body, was as far from being Fleſh and Bones, as any Fleſh, that is now diſſolved into Duſt, can poſſibly be; and therefore, if, of no better Materials, he formed ſuch a *beautiful* Structure, why ſhould it be thought ſo *difficult* a Work, out of the ſame Materials to *rebuild it*, ſince, of the two, it ſeems to be an *eaſier* Conception, how that, which *has* been, *may* be made again, than how that may be made, which has never been before?

Though the Parts of our Bodies be diſſolved,

The Body is diſſolved into Duſt indeed, is corrupted, and has loſt every Feature and Lineament of what it once was: But when we ſee an *Artiſt*, who knows every *Pin* and Part of the *Machine* himſelf has made, if it chance to fall to Pieces, and the Pieces lie in the utmoſt Diſorder and Confuſion, *collecting* them together with eaſe, and, as he underſtands their ſeveral *Uſes*, *aſſigning* them their proper *Places*, and *diſpoſing* them into the ſame *Form* and Figure, wherein they were before, ſurely we cannot but ſuppoſe, that the almighty *Architect* of the World is able to do, what we ſee a common *Mechanick* (though in a lower Inſtance indeed) perform with ſo much Addreſs and Dexterity. (*z*) The only Difference in the *Illuſtration* is—that God needs no *Inſtruments* or Deliberation; he can deſign and effect his Work at once: Whereas *intenſe* Thought and Application are previouſly neceſſary to Men, both towards the *Production*, and *Reparation* of any curious Piece of Workmanſhip.

Diſperſed,

The Duſt of this Body is diſperſed in the Air, carried about from Place to Place, and mingled with other Parts of Matter; but, wherever it is, it cannot eſcape the Knowledge of God, for though it *fly* (*a*) *up to Heaven*, he is *there*, or if it be thruſt *down to Hell*, he *is there alſo, though it* be ſcattered on *the Wings of the Morning*, and *remain in the uttermoſt Parts of the Sea*, yet even there ſhall his *Omnipreſence* find it, and thence ſhall his *right Hand* fetch it out, and lead it Home to its ancient *Proprietor*. But (to cut the Work ſhort) it is reaſonable to preſume, that, as God may have a more than ordinary Regard to the Duſt of human Bodies, ſo, when we ſuppoſe it ſcattered up and down in our *Atmoſphere*, and doomed as it were to irretriveable Confuſion, (*b*) he may diſpoſe of it in the moſt *regular* and methodical *Repoſitories*, from whence he can extract what belongs to each Body, whenever there is Occaſion. (*c*) This Property he has impreſſed upon the Loadſtone, that it can ſeparate the Duſt or Particles of Steel, though mixed in a Lump of

(*u*) *Maynard*'s Ser. Vol. I. (*x*) *Rogers*'s Poſth. Ser. (*y*) *Pearſon* on the Creed. (*z*) *Fiddes*'s Body. Vol. I. (*a*) Pſ. cxxxix. 8, &c. (*b*) *Rogers*'s Poſth. Ser. (*c*) *Heylyn* on the Reſur. *intermixed.*

of *Clay*, and, by being gently moved upon its *Superficies*, attract them all into one Lump. And may not we, from this ſmall *Emblem*, be induced to believe, that the univerſal Author of Nature, who has given all Creatures their reſpective Properties, has himſelf a Power, with the leaſt *Beck* of his Will, to ſingle out all the *conſtituent* Parts of any one Body, however blended and intangled with others, and, with the ſame Facility, to command them together again, and ſo reproduce the ſame Body? Not to ſay (*d*) that he might, if he pleaſed, impreſs a Kind of natural Force or Inclination upon theſe ſeveral Parts, to move to one another, as readily, as *homogeneous* Metals do in a Chymiſt's Furnace.

Tranſmuted, *The Parts of this Body have undergone manifold Changes, and are at laſt tranſmuted into other Subſtances:* But ſtill, when we ſee, (*e*) that a Parcel of *Quickſilver*, after it has run a tedious *Courſe* of Alteration, ſhift itſelf out of its proper *Form* into that of *Vapour*; out of a Vapour, into an inſipid *Water*; out of Water, into a white, or red, or yellow *Powder*; out of that, into a *Salt*, and thence into a malleable *Metal*, may, by a ſkilful Artiſt, be reduced, out of all theſe various *Contextures*, into its natural Form of plain and running *Mercury*; when we ſee this, I ſay, why ſhould we think it either *impoſſible* or *difficult* for a Being of infinite Knowledge and Power to watch the *wandering* Particles of our corrupted Bodies through all their ſucceſſive Alterations, and to retrieve them out of all thoſe Subſtances, into which they ſhall be finally reſolved; to take out of one Body what belongs to another; to reſtore each its own; and finally, to incorporate them together in the natural Form, which they once poſſeſſed?

(*f*) Upon theſe Conſiderations it was an Argument of *Ignorance*, as well as impotent *Malice*, in the Heathens, to *burn* the Bodies of the *primitive* Martyrs, and then to ſcatter their Aſhes in the Air, with a Deſign to expoſe the Doctrine, and defeat their Expectation of a Reſurrection: for, had they argued at all upon the Notion of a Deity, as an *Omniſcient* and *Almighty* Being, they might *eaſily*, or rather, they muſt *neceſſarily*, have formed this Conception—that, as nothing can be *concealed* from infinite Knowledge, ſo nothing, that is a poſſible Object of Power, can be rendered *impracticable* to Omnipotence.

Or devoured by Man-eaters, which is ſhewn from various Suppoſitions.

But ſuppoſe the Parts of one Body to be turned into the Subſtance of another (as in the Caſe of thoſe, that eat Man's Fleſh) how is it poſſible, then, that, at the Reſurrection, there ſhould be diſtinct Bodies? (*g*) Were there any ſuch *Cannibals* in the World, as lived wholly upon Man's Fleſh, this Difficulty would appear much greater; but ſince the only real Inſtances, we meet with, are of ſome rude and barbarous People, who account it a Piece of *Gallantry* to devour their Enemies, whom they have taken in Battle, and, of others, who, by Extremity of Famine, have been driven to it, what would ſerve to ſtop a *ravenous* Appetite, would contribute very little towards *increaſing* the Subſtance of the Body; and as thoſe, who deal in *ſtatick* Experiments, inform us, that not the *hundredth Part* of what we eat is turned into Nutriment, and all the reſt paſſes away either by *ſenſible* or *inſenſible* Evacuations, why may we not ſuppoſe, that, by the providential Care of God, the Fleſh of one Man, eaten by another, may be ejected out of the Body, in the Manner we are now ſpeaking of, and never ſuffered to enter into thoſe Veſſels, which are deſigned to convey Nouriſhment? (*h*) Human Fleſh ſeems to be ſo *unnatural* and improper Food, that perhaps Nature will not do its *Office* in digeſting it; the nouriſhing Faculties may *recoil*, and the Parts, that are taken in, may not mix with the *nutritious* Juices, and ſo never come to ſuch a Coaleſcence, as to make Fleſh; in which Caſe, what the *Man-eater* devours becomes no Part of him, but ſinks into and reſts in the *common Maſs* of Matter, contained in the *four Elements* (as (*i*) ſome expreſs it) and there continues unchanged by any *new Animation*, until the laſt Day.

It may be ſuppoſed farther, (*k*) that, in all Animals there are certain *conſtituent* inſenſible *Principles*, which contain, in *Miniature*, the ſeveral Parts of the whole Body; that the *foreign* Matter, taken in by Way of *Nutriment*, which fills and diſtends a Man's Body, and augments

(*d*) *Nichols*'s Confer. Vol. I. (*e*) *Scot*'s Mediator. (*f*) *Fiddes*'s Body Vol. I. (*g*) *Stillingfleet*'s Ser.
(*h*) *Edwards*'s Body Vol. II. (*i*) *South*'s Ser. Vol. IV. (*k*) *Fiddes*'s Body Vol. I.

ments the Members of it, is not ſtrictly *eſſential* to it; and that while the Particles of this foreign Matter are in a continual *Flux*, the original and fundamental Principle (which properly conſtitutes the Body) through all the Changes of Life and Death, remains itſelf fixed and unchangeable, without *Confuſion* of Parts, or the leaſt Danger of *incorporating* with other Bodies. That there is ſuch a *radical* Principle in Mens Bodies, ſeems to be intimated in St. *Paul*'s *Illuſtration* of the *Manner* of their Reſurrection by a Grain of *Corn*, which, after the other ſenſible Parts of it are corrupted, gradually unfolds itſelf, firſt into the *Stalk*, then the *Blade*, then the *Ear*, and after that into another Grain of the ſame Form; even as the *Aſhes* of a Plant, we are told, ſown in a Garden, have produced other Plants of the ſame Kind, and ſometimes much fairer and larger, than the *Original*, which plainly ſhews, that, in theſe Things, there is a *ſeminal* Principle, not liable to Corruption, and containing in it theſe ſeveral Parts, which, by juſt Degrees, *ſpring* up, and are augmented in this curious and ſurprizing Manner. And may we not ſuppoſe, that there is a like Principle appertaining to each human Body, *unchangeable*, and *uncorruptible*, (however the reſt of it may be conſumed,) which God keeps under his watchful Eye, and from whence, by an eaſy *Dilatation* of its Parts, he may reproduce the whole Body, the *ſame* in Kind, though vaſtly improved, as we ſee he does the *Corn* in the Field: For *what Means, even phyſical ones*, (ſays (*l*) a great Enquirer upon this Subject,) *the moſt wiſe Author of Nature, and abſolute Governor of the World is able to employ, to bring the Reſurrection to paſs, our dim and narrow Knowledge are not able to determine.*

But whatever becomes of this *Hypotheſis*, the current Opinion both of *Philoſophers*, and *Phyſicians* is —— (*m*) that the Bones, and Muſcles, and Tendons, and Nerves, and all the *eſſential* conſtituent Parts of human Bodies, are of ſo *firm* and ſolid a Subſtance, as to admit of little or no Alteration, during our Lives, when once they come to their full Growth and Proportion. The reſt of the Body, *ſay they*, is *vaſcular*, and made up of *Veſſels*, and Pipes repleniſhed with their ſeveral *Juices*, and Liquors; but the *ſolid* Parts are of ſo durable a Subſtance, that they can ſuffer no *Diminution*, except it be by ſuch *Corroſives*, as diſſolve them. Now ſince the Parts, which properly conſtitute the human Body, and give it its Denomination, are always the ſame, and its Change only in the *variable* and *accidental* Parts, which are not neceſſary to conſtitute a Body; and ſince theſe *neceſſary* conſtituent Parts are ſo *few* in Number, in Compariſon of the *reſt*, which make up the *Bulk* of the Man's Body, and, in their Nature, ſo very *unfit* to be converted into Nouriſhment; it may be concluded, that, as theſe are the Parts, which your *Men-eaters* chooſe leaſt of all to feed upon, ſo ſhould they, at any Time, be driven to it, there would be little or nothing of them, but what either, by the Laws of Nature, or the *Providence* of God would be prevented from turning to Nouriſhment; and, if ſo, then muſt the Bodies, both of the Devourer and Devoured, when they come to riſe, be perfect and entire, ſeparate and diſtinct. For, (*n*) ſince God has poſitively declared that all Bodies ſhall be ſo, we need not queſtion, but that he will rather exert his *Power* (if there be Occaſion for it) towards hindering thoſe *Effects*, which would render his Deſign *impracticable*, than by any Means ſuffer it to become *abortive*.

So that the Reſurrection will be real.

Upon the whole therefore it appears, that, in what Manner ſoever our Bodies are diſpoſed of; whether they periſh in the Sea, or in the Land; be conſumed by Worms and Rottenneſs, or devoured by Men or Beaſts, by Fowls or Fiſhes, whatever Courſe, I ſay, they take to Putrefaction, or whatever *Tranſmutations* they may afterwards undergo, they can, in no Shape, eſcape the boundleſs Knowledge and Power of God, (*o*) *Who will bring our Reſurrection to paſs, not according to natural Laws or Meaſures, but according to the Efficacy of his own Will, which does not ſtand in Need of any Thing to accompliſh what he pleaſes.* It is to the Power of God, that we intirely refer the Work of the Reſurrection: And, as all Things are equally poſſible to him, there is no Occaſion, upon Account of the Difficulties, that ſeem to attend it, to have Recourſe to a *forced and figurative* Senſe of the Word.

(*l*) *Boyle*'s Conſid. of the Reſurr. (*m*) *Jenkins*'s Reaſon. Vol. II. (*n*) *Fiddes*'s Body Vol. I.
(*o*) *Juſt. Mar.* Qu. & Reſp.

Reſurrection, (*p*) we own, may in ſome Places denote the ſame, as *Regeneration*, or riſing from Sin to a Life of Righteouſneſs; but is this any Argument, that it is always to be uſed ſo, and never in its *genuine* Signification, eſpecially when the *Form* of Expreſſion, and the Deſign of the *Context* require, that it ſhould be properly underſtood? If the *metaphorical* Uſe of a Word in ſome Places did utterly vacate its *proper* Signification, and could juſtify our *figurative* Interpretation of it, when we pleaſed, ſuch a *Liberty* of Conſtruction might eaſily *allegorize*, and would ſoon deſtroy all the *Articles* of the Chriſtian Faith, ſince no Word could be ſo plain, no Argument ſo ſtrong, but may by ſuch *Artifice* be evaded. As little Occaſion is there, merely for the Sake of the like Difficulties, to ſuppoſe, that a *new ætherial* Body will be given us at the Time of our Reſurrection, when, contrary to this, the whole Tenor of Scripture informs us, that they ſhall be the ſame in *Subſtance*, though greatly altered in their *Qualities*, refined and ſpiritualized for Immortality, and thereby made as meet to be fit Companions for our *exalted* Souls, as if they were deſcended from an higher *Original*. But this is a Subject reſerved for the *Diſſertation*.

And the Body not ætherial,

Which we ought to believe, though we could not anſwer every Objection.

THUS we have endeavoured to ſatisfy the moſt *popular* Objections againſt a future Reſurrection; but, if herein we have not anſwered every one's Expectation, it ought to be remembered, that as this is a Doctrine wholly founded upon divine Revelation, if the Scriptures be in Reality the *Word* of God, and if in them this *Article* is manifeſtly contained (neither of which can in the leaſt be doubted of by any, who pretends to the Name of a *Chriſtian*) then all Objections againſt it, though never ſo ſtrong, muſt, of Neceſſity, fall to the Ground; becauſe whatever is *contrary* to the *Word*, and Affirmation of a *Being*, infinitely knowing, and eſſentially infallible, let it carry with it never ſo great an Appearance of Truth, yet it certainly is, and can be nothing elſe, but *Fallacy* and *Impoſture*: And upon this Account we need not be afraid to affirm——(*q*) "that, though we "could not ſolve the foregoing *Objection*, "urged againſt the Reſurrection, and taken "from the continual *Tranſmutation* of "Bodies into one another, or any other "ſuch like Argument; yet this would not "abate our Obligation to acknowledge, "and embrace it, as an *indiſpenſible* Part "of our Chriſtian Faith, nor ſhould we "at all be the *worſe* Chriſtians, for not "being able to give a *philoſophical* Ac-"count, and Solution thereof, ſo long as, "with a *non obſtante* to all theſe Diffi-"culties, we ſtedfaſtly adhered to this "great Article of our *Creed*."

The DISSERTATION.

Of the Identity, and Change of the Reſurrection-Body.

Wherein this Identity *conſiſts.*

ST. *Paul*, in that Paſſage, wherein he declares, (*r*) that our future *Bodies ſhall be faſhioned like unto Chriſt's glorious Body*, has informed us, that we ſhall be raiſed in the higheſt Perfection of that Part of our Nature; that thoſe, conſequently, who die in their *Infancy*, or in the *waſting* of Sickneſs, or old Age, under a *depraved* Conſtitution, or any outward *Maim*, or *Deformity*, ſhall have all theſe Decays and Imperfections ſupplied with ſuch a Proportion of Vigour and Strength, of Beauty and Comelineſs, as Men generally arrive at in the *Flower* of their Age. For if our Saviour (as (*s*) the Ancients uſe to argue) healed the Blind, the Lame, the Leper, and all, that came to him for Cure, while he was here upon Earth, will he not repair the Defects and Blemiſhes of all thoſe, whom he vouchſafes to admit into the Glories of his celeſtial Kingdom?

Now, upon the Suppoſition, that ſuch Additions and Improvements will attend our Reſurrection-Bodies, we muſt not imagine, that their *Identity* will conſiſt in the ſame *Quantity* of Matter, neither more nor leſs, nor in the ſame individual *Particles*, that they had, when our Souls took their Farewell of the World. The ſame Perſon, we all acknowledge, has the *ſame* Body in his *old Age*, that he had in his *Youth*, as truly as he has the *ſame* Body in *Sickneſs*, which

(*p*) *Maynard*'s Ser. Vol. I. (*q*) *South*'s Ser. Vol. IV. (*r*) Phil. iii. 21.
(*s*) Auguſt. de Civit. L. 22.

which he had in *Health*, and the *ſame* under the *Languiſhings* of a Conſumption, that he had in his utmoſt Bloom and Vigour; and therefore, to denominate the ſame Body, it is ſufficient, that it have the *neceſſary* and conſtituent Parts of it. The Blood, the Juices, and pulpous Matter of the Fleſh (as *Phyſicians* have obſerved) are not the *conſtituent*, but only the *accidental* Parts of the Body, which are perpetually waſting and renewing: If therefore the *neceſſary* and eſſential Parts be but preſerved, or recovered at the Reſurrection, what is *adventitious*, and ſerves only to the *Completion* of the Body, * may be taken from thoſe Parts, which, by any Manner of *Evacuation*, have gone off, and which God may be ſuppoſed to reſerve, (as we ſaid before) in proper *Repoſitories* for that very Purpoſe, and then the Body, at the Reſurrection, in every Point and Particle of it, at leaſt, in every Thing, that is eſſential to it, becomes the *ſame*.

This proved from ſeveral Reaſons,

THIS is the *Identity* we inſiſt on; and in this Senſe we believe, that the ſame Body, which was ſeparated from the Soul at the Day of Death, ſhall, at the Reſurrection, be raiſed again, and vitally united to it. (*t*) In Death nothing *falls* but the Body, for *the Spirit goeth upward, and returns to God, that gave it*, and therefore, at the Reſurrection, nothing elſe can be ſaid to *riſe* again; and as, when a Man *dies*, no other Body falls to Ruin, but his; ſo when he *returns to Life* again, it muſt be his own Body, that is raiſed, and redintegrated, ſince a *different* Body might indeed be called a *new Creation*, or a *new Formation*, but could not, with any Propriety of Speech, come under the Notion of a *Reſurrection*, which neceſſarily implies, that the *ſame* Body ſhould riſe again, which before fell under the Stroke of Death.

IT has been obſerved upon this Subject, that, as our Bodies, while we live, are really diſtinguiſhed from all other Creatures, and, as the Body of every particular Man is different from the Bodies of all other Men; (*u*) ſo the Congruity between that and his Soul may be ſuch, that, for any Thing we know, his Soul can be united only to its *proper* Body. *Matter* indeed, in *itſelf*, is all the *ſame*, and incapable of any Manner of *Senſation*; but, when it is formed into an human Body, and united to the Soul, it is not only endued with *Senſe*, but becomes the *Source* of certain Propenſions and Appetites, which are in Scripture repreſented, as (*x*) *warring againſt the Law of the Mind, and bringing Men into Captivity to the Law of Sin.* And, as Sin is thus charged upon the *inordinate* Appetites of the Body, ſo thoſe Bodies, in which ſuch depraved Inclinations are ſubdued and mortified, are called (*y*) *ſanctified Veſſels*, (*z*) *Members of Chriſt*, and *Temples of the Holy Ghoſt*; from whence we may gather, that, in the Reſurrection, the Soul will have a much greater *Congruity* with the Body, which it hath inhabited, than with that *Matter*, to which it was never before *vitally* united; becauſe it ſeems very agreeable to God's infinite Juſtice, that thoſe Bodies, which have been enſlaved by *Sin*, ſhould be conſigned to *Miſery*, and that thoſe, which have comported themſelves according to the Laws of God, ſhould be made Partakers of *Happineſs*; whereas other *Portions* of Matter, which have not been united to the Soul, and therefore not endued with ſuch *Affections* and Powers, as rendered them capable of being *Sharers* in *Virtue* or *Vice*, cannot, with any Colour of Reaſon, be deemed the Objects of *Reward* or *Puniſhment*.

AT (*a*) *the Judgment-Seat of Chriſt* we are told, *that every one ſhall receive the Things*

* To this Purpoſe we find a great Writer of our Church expreſſing himſelf in theſe Words——"If a "Man lives to thirty or forty Years, his Body hath undergone many new *Repairs* in that Time, and all the "old *Materials* were as true and real Parts of the Body, as new ones, and yet it is *the ſame* Body, in the "Senſe of all Mankind. Why ſhould it not then be the ſame Body at the Day of Reſurrection, if ſome of "the Parts, before conſumed, be taken to make it up, as well as thoſe *individual* Parts, which a Man had at "the Time of his Death? Suppoſe a *corpulent* Man to fall into *lingring* Diſeaſes, or a *gradual* Conſumption "of all the Parts of the Body, muſt this Man, at the Day of his Reſurrection, have no more as belonging to "his Body, than he had left upon him at the Hour of his Death? Would it not be *the ſame Body*, if it were "made up of the Parts, he had at the Beginning of his Conſumption? If it be, then the ſame Reaſon will hold "as to other Times of his Life; and ſo the mighty *Objection* from the *Cannibals* devouring thoſe Parts of the "Body, which a Man had at the Time of his Death, can be of no Force to overthrow the *Poſſibility* of the "Reſurrection." *Stillingfleet*'s Ser.

(*t*) *Pearſon* on the Creed. (*u*) *Jenkin*'s Reaſon. Vol. II. (*x*) Rom. vii. 23. (*y*) 2 Tim. ii. 21. (*z*) 1 Cor. vi. 15, 19. (*a*) 2 Cor. v. 10.

Things done in his Body. "For this (ſays "(*b*) St. *Ambroſe*,) is the Series, and "Ground of divine Juſtice, that, becauſe "our Actions are the Joint-iſſue both of "Body and Soul, what is deſigned by the "one being executed by the other, there-"fore both ſhould be brought together to "Judgment, and both together be con-"ſigned over either to Puniſhment or "Glory. That Body, which was the "Inſtrument of Wickedneſs, muſt not "eſcape unpuniſhed; nor muſt that Body, "which was devoted to God's Service, "miſs of its Reward." For it is incon-ſiſtent with the Rules of *Juſtice*, that one Body ſhould ſtrive, and mortify, and ſuffer *for Chriſt's Sake*, and another Body, a new-formed Body, that had never any Share or Perception of this Kind, ſhould come in to ſupplant it, and receive the Crown.

As well as the Scripture, both of the Old,

LOOK we but into the Word of God, and there we ſhall find, in *Confirmation* of theſe Arguments from *Reaſon*, the *Identity* of the riſing Body as plainly revealed, as the Reſurrection itſelf. That Paſſage of *Job*, (*c*) *though, after my Skin, Worms deſtroy this Body, yet in my Fleſh ſhall I ſee God*, which ſome refer to his Expectation of his former Proſperity, or at leaſt a State of Happineſs in the other World, * does certainly, in its moſt *natural* and obvious Senſe, denote the Reſurrection of his own Body. The Prophecy of *Daniel*, (*d*) *many, that ſleep in the Duſt of the Earth ſhall awake*, (whatever the *Jews* may pretend to the contrary) is not capable of any other Conſtruction; nor can a better Reaſon be given, why the Scripture, in ſo many Places, uſes the Metaphors of *ſleeping* and *awaking* to expreſs our *Death* and *Reſurrection*, than, that it means thereby to ſuggeſt to us, that as the Bodies, wherewith we riſe in the *Morning*, are the *ſame* with thoſe, we had, before we laid ourſelves down to *ſleep*, though greatly refreſhed and invigorated; ſo, when we awake from the dead, our Bodies will be of the ſame *Subſtance* and Modification, with what they are now, though vaſtly refined and improved in all their *Qualities*. The Viſion of *Ezekiel*, (*e*) in the *Valley full of Bones*, though *primarily* intended to repreſent the *temporal* Deliverance of the *Jewiſh* Nation, yet is ſo lively a Deſcription of the Reſurrection of the ſame Body, that, about the Time of the *Babyloniſh* Captivity, this needs muſt have been a prevailing Doctrine among them; even as the Speech of one of the *ſeven* Brethren, when his Hands were to be cut off, (*f*) *theſe I had from God, and from him I hope to receive them again, for us, who have died for his Laws, will he raiſe to everlaſting Life*, plainly ſhews, that, in the Time of the *Maccabees*, this was the general Perſuaſion.

And New *Teſtament.*

WHATEVER Notions the *Jews* might have, at our Saviour's coming into the World, it is certain, that he himſelf has ſufficiently eſtabliſhed this Point, by aſſuring us, that the ſame Bodies, (*g*) *that are in their Graves*, or Sepulchres, *ſhall come forth*, which St. *Paul* confirms by declaring, that (*h*) *he, who raiſed up Chriſt from the dead, ſhall alſo quicken our mortal Bodies*; meaning, that thoſe Bodies, by Reaſon of whoſe Mortality we die, are the Materials, that, in the Reſurrection, ſhall be revived. St. *Paul* indeed (eſpecially where he ſets himſelf on purpoſe to argue this Doctrine) is more expreſſive, than any other ſacred Writer; and, by making ſuch Uſe of the Similitude of *Corn*, he plainly intended to convince us, that the ſame *numerical* Body was to riſe again: "For, "(*i*) as Corn groweth not *indifferently* "out of any *Ground*, but there muſt be "Seed ſown, out of which it may ſpring, "and therefore every Sort of Grain pro-"duceth Corn of its own Likeneſs, and "peculiar Form; ſo at the Reſurrection "the Bodies of them, that ariſe, ſhall "not be formed *indifferently* out of any "*Matter*, but the Bodies that die, thoſe "mortal and corruptible Bodies, ſhall be, "in a *figurative* Senſe, as it were the Seed, "and material Principle of thoſe immortal "and incorruptible ones, into which we "ſhall then be quickened:" (*k*) *For this*

* This we may be ſatisfied of, not only from the ſolemn and weighty Preface, wherewith they are introduced, *Oh that my Words were written! O that they were printed in a Book! that they were graven with an iron Pen, and Lead, in the Rock for ever!* as containing ſomething of the higheſt Moment and Importance; but from the *laſt Verſe* of the Book itſelf, as it is rendered by the *Septuagint*, *ſo* Job *died, being old, and full of Days, but it is written, that he ſhall riſe again with thoſe, whom the Lord raiſes up.* *Clarke*'s Ser. Vol. V.

(*b*) De Reſurr. (*c*) Job xix. 26. (*d*) Dan. xii. 2. (*e*) Ezek. xxxvii. 1, &c.
(*f*) 2 Macc. vii. 11. (*g*) John v. 28, 29. (*h*) Rom. viii. 11. (*i*) *Clarke*'s Ser. Vol. IV.
(*k*) 1 Cor. xv. 53.

this corruptible muſt put on Incorruption, and this mortal muſt put on Immortality; (*m*) Upon which Word * *Theophylact* has this Comment: "Leſt any one ſhould "miſunderſtand the Apoſtle, where he "ſays, that (*n*) *Fleſh and Blood cannot in-* "*herit the Kingdom of God*, and taking "him in a literal Senſe, ſhould there- "by be led into an Error, that the *ſame* "Body, which now conſiſts of Fleſh "and Blood, ſhall not ariſe, he does, "with a peculiar *Emphaſis*, point demon- "ſtratively to it, *this mortal*, and *this* "*corruptible*, ſince nothing ſhall be loſt "of it, but its Infirmities, its Mortality, "and Corruption, when *Death* ſhall come "to *be ſwallowed up in Victory*."

The Opinions of the ancient Fathers,

In Conformity to theſe Declarations in Scripture, moſt of the *ancient* Writers of the Church have delivered their Opinions—That there would be a Reſurrection of that Body, which fell to the Ground, becauſe the proper Signification of the *Word* is nothing elſe, but the *riſing again* of that which fell; that, as *Enoch* and *Elias* were tranſlated into Heaven without parting with their Bodies, and thoſe, who ſhall be *alive* at our Saviour's ſecond *Advent*, ſhall not put off their *Earthly Tabernacles*, (*o*) *but be cloathed upon with their Houſe, which is from Heaven*, as the Apoſtle expreſſes it, ſo ſhould it be at the Reſurrection; that all ſhould, at that Time, be reſtored to the very *ſame* Bodies, in which they dwelt, and which, at laſt, were laid in the Grave; that their Bodies ſhould then be as truly the *ſame* with thoſe, they died in, as the Bodies of them, whom our Saviour raiſed, when he was upon Earth, were with thoſe, in which they died; that if the *ſame* Body did not riſe, neither could the *ſame Man* be ſaid to riſe, becauſe as Man conſiſts of a Body, as well as Soul, to the *Identity* of every *compound* Being, an Union of the *ſame eſſential* Parts is required; and therefore they concluded, that, as he, who denied a Reſurrection, was to be looked upon as an *Infidel*, ſo he, who maintained, that any other Body, but that which ſlept in the Duſt, would riſe again, was a Miſbeliever.

And Judgment of our own Church.

These were the Sentiments of the *primitive* Fathers, and (what may be a farther Recommendation to them) theſe are the Sentiments, which our holy Mother the Church of *England* has adopted, as appears by her making the Words of *Job*, *I know that my Redeemer liveth*, &c. one of the *Introductory* Sentences in her *Funeral-Service*; by her reading St. *Paul*'s Account of the *Identity* of the dying and living Body as a proper *Leſſon* upon that Occaſion; and, during the Time of the Interment, by profeſſing her Faith and Hope, that Chriſt, at the laſt Day, (*p*) *will change our vile Bodies* (ſuch, as is then depoſited in the Grave) *that they may be faſhioned like unto his glorious Body, according to the mighty working, whereby he is able to ſubdue all Things to himſelf*; and in what Manner and Degree that wonderful Change will be effected in us, this is the other Part of our *Enquiry*, whereof the ſame Apoſtle, by Way of *Antitheſis*, has given us this Deſcription, *viz.* that our preſent Body (*q*) *is ſown in Corruption, but raiſed in Incorruption*; *ſown in Diſhonour, but raiſed in Glory*; *ſown in Weakneſs, but raiſed in Power*; *and ſown a natural Body, but raiſed a ſpiritual Body*.

The Changes that ſhall paſs upon the Bodies of the Righteous.

It is ſown in Corruption: For ſuch frail and brittle Things, are theſe Bodies of ours, that every the leaſt Violence diſturbs, and unfits them for their Operations, and yet ſo dependent are they upon the due *Diſpoſition* of ſuch a Multitude of *little* Parts, and theſe Parts ſo ſubject to ſuch a Variety of *Hurts* and Caſualties, that the Wonder is not, how we come to die ſo ſoon, but how we continue to live, ſo much as one Day. The Parts of the Body, I ſay, are in a Manner innumerable; and yet, (*r*) if any of theſe be diſordered; if but one of thoſe ſlender Veins, or tender Membranes,

* St. *Auſtin*, in his Expoſition of this Article (de Fide & Symb.) writes much to the ſame Purpoſe, *this viſible Fleſh*, ſays he, *which is properly called Fleſh, ſhall ariſe*; *for the Apoſtle* Paul *doth ſeem to point, as it were with his Finger, when he ſaith, this corruptible ſhall put on Incorruption, and this mortal Immortality*: and yet in another Place (Enchir. ad Laurent. C. 91.) *he aſſerts, that the Bodies of the Saints ſhall ariſe without any Defect or Deformity, as well as without any Corruption, Heavineſs, or Obſtruction, being, by the Change of their Properties, fitted and prepared for everlaſting Life*. Crit. Hiſt. of the Creed.

(*m*) In locum. (*n*) 1 Cor. xv. 50. (*o*) 2 Cor. v. 2. (*p*) Phil. iii. 21. (*q*) 1 Cor. xv. 42, &c. (*r*) *Calamy*'s Ser.

one of thoſe little Nerves or Fibres, whereof our Fleſh is compoſed, be either contracted, or extended beyond its due Proportion, corroded by any ſharp Humour, broken, or but obſtructed, ſuch Pain and Anguiſh does enſue, as diſturb the Tranquillity of the Mind, and make Life itſelf a Burden. But now this Body, which is of ſo tender a Conſtitution, and ſo liable to Accidents and Diſorders, which coſts us ſo much Pains, to ſupply its Wants, to preſerve its Health, to repair its Decays, and hinder it from droping into Duſt, as long as we can, ſhall, at the Reſurrection, *be raiſed in Incorruption*, ſhall be perfectly refined and purged from all the Seeds of Weakneſs and Mortality, and made up of Parts, ſo firm and compact, and withal ſo exactly conſtituted, that it ſhall neither in itſelf have any Tendency to *Diſunion*, nor be expoſed to any Violence, that can occaſion it, and, being thus fortified both within and without againſt all Attempts towards a Diſſolution, what ſhould hinder it from living as long as the Soul, to which it is united, even to all Eternity? (*s*) *For we know*, ſays the Apoſtle, *that, if our earthly Houſe of this Tabernacle were diſſolved, we have another, not made with Hands, eternal in the Heavens*, and therefore our Saviour pronounces of thoſe, who ſhall be accounted *worthy* to attain that bleſſed Reſurrection, (*t*) *that they cannot die any more, for they are equal unto the Angels, and are the Children of God.*

It is ſown in Diſhonour: For the Body, when dead, whatever its Funeral-Pomp may be, and whatever *Trophies*, and Enſigns of Diſtinction, *Heralds* may invent, to diſguiſe, and ſet it off, is, in itſelf, ſo vile and abject, ſo nauſeous and loathſom, ſo frightful and ghaſtly, that the deareſt Friends and Relations cannot endure it above Ground, but are glad to (*u*) *bury it out of their Sight.* But now this ſame Body (how unlikely ſoever the Materials may ſeem) ſhall, at the laſt Trump, *be raiſed in Glory*, or transformed into a beautiful and illuſtrious Body; for ſo our Saviour aſſures us, that, (*x*) *at their Reſurrection, the Righteous ſhall ſhine forth, as the Sun, in the Kingdom of their Father*, i. e. the Matter of their Bodies ſhall be refined, and exalted into a bright and lucid Subſtance, which will glitter, like the Sun, and caſt forth Beams of Glory round about them: for ſuch is our Saviour, at his *Tranſfiguration*, deſcribed to be, with *his (y) Face ſhining as the Sun, and his Rayment*, pierced through with the Rays, which proceeded from his Body, *exceeding white as Snow*; and ſuch ſhall they become, when, by his *mighty Power, they are faſhioned like unto him.* Nor need we think it ſtrange, that the vile offenſive Carcaſe, which we lay down in the Grave, ſhould become capable of ſuch a glorious *Change:* for, if, (*z*) according to the beſt *Philoſophy*, there is no *ſpecifick* Difference in Matter, and if, by nothing elſe, but mere *Motion*, the moſt baſe and ignoble Matter may not only be *cryſtallized*, but transformed into a *flaming* Brightneſs, as we are ſure it may; into what a radiant Subſtance may the Matter of this mortal Body be wrought by the Concurrence of an infinite Power, with the Vigour and Activity of a glorified Soul? (*a*) *A Man's Wiſdom*, according to the Obſervation of *Solomon, maketh his Face to ſhine*; and much more will the Motions of his Soul, his Joy and Hope, the Conſciouſneſs of his Integrity, and his Affiance in God's Favour ſhew forth themſelves with a remarkable Force and Luſtre in the Brightneſs of his Countenance: For, if St. *Stephen*'s Innocence, and joyful Aſſurance could make (*b*) *his Face appear, as if it had been the Face of an Angel*, and (*c*) *Moſes*'s converſing with God ſurrounded *his* with a *Radiancy* too refulgent for the *Iſraelites* to look upon, how much greater Alteration muſt the ſtrong and powerful Operations of a glorified Soul, raviſhed with a *beatifick* Viſion of God, make in a refined, immortal, and incorruptible Body?

It is ſown in Weakneſs: For our Body, in its preſent State, is frail, and faint, and feeble, conſtantly ſubject to the Decays of Nature, and Infirmities of Age, and daily ſtanding in need of Recruits and Repairs, which, though it always has, it is always wanting ſtill more and more, to maintain and ſupport: And ſo badly does it requite the

(*s*) 2 Cor. v. 1. (*t*) Luke xx. 36. (*u*) Gen. xxiii. 8. (*x*) Matt. xiii. 43. (*y*) Matt. xvii. 2. (*z*) *Scot*'s Mediator. (*a*) Eccleſ. viii. 1. (*b*) Acts vi. 15. (*c*) Exod. xxxiv. 29, &c.

the Care and Pains, that we beſtow upon it, (*d*) that the ancient *Platoniſts* were wont to call it, the Clog, the Cage, and the Priſon, which did confine the Freedom of the Soul, and hinder it in its moſt *ſprightly* Operations, even as the Author of the *Wiſdom of Solomon* has obſerved, that *the corruptible Body preſſeth down the the Soul, and the earthly Tabernacle weigheth down the Mind, that muſeth upon many Things.* But, notwithſtanding this, *it ſhall be raiſed in Power*; ſtrong and vigorous, active and impaſſible, ſo that it ſhall be able to live for ever, without Decay; move for ever, without Wearineſs; faſt for ever, without Hunger; and wake for ever, without any Need or Deſire of Refreſhment; and, conſequently, be every Way qualified, not only to accompany its Soul in its moſt exalted Operations, but to live in Fellowſhip likewiſe with the *miniſtring Spirits*, that are above, for (*e*) *they, that wait upon the Lord, ſhall renew their Strength; they ſhall mount up with Wings as Eagles; they ſhall run and not be weary; and they ſhall walk and not be faint.* Then ſhall our Bodies, once for ever, be cured of all their old Pains and Infirmities, and freed from all the Evils and Miſeries of this mortal Life; for (*f*) *they ſhall hunger no more, neither thirſt any more, neither ſhall the Sun light on them, nor any Heat; for the Lamb, which is in the midſt of the Throne, ſhall feed them, and ſhall lead them unto living Fountains of Water*; and (*g*) *God ſhall wipe away all Tears from their Eyes, and there ſhall be no more Death, neither Sorrow, nor crying, neither ſhall there be any more Pain, for the former Things are paſſed away.*

Lastly, *it is ſown a natural Body*; For, while we continue here, our Bodies are fitted only for this *animal* Life, which depends (as that of *Beaſts* does) upon the Return of an uncertain *Breath*, and is refreſhed with ſenſual *Pleaſures*, which they enjoy in common with us, and, on ſundry Occaſions, prove hurtful and injurious to the Soul. (*h*) The Fleſh, which we now ſo immoderately doat upon, is one of the moſt dangerous Enemies we have, and therefore *renounced* by all Chriſtians in their *Baptiſm.* It continually tempts and ſolicits us to evil: Every *Senſe* of it is a Snare, and all its *Appetites*, if not carefully watched, will become *inordinate*, for (*i*) *the Fleſh luſteth againſt the Spirit, and the Spirit againſt the Fleſh, and theſe* (ſaith the Apoſtle) *are contrary the one to the other, ſo that we cannot do the Things, that we would.* But now at the Reſurrection of the Juſt, the Body ſhall be *raiſed a ſpiritual Body*: i. e. In many of its Properties, as nearly approaching to a Spirit (according to our imperfect Ideas of it) as it is poſſible for a Body to do; and ſhall therefore be wholly delivered from all thoſe *Wants* and Incumbrances, which are now ſo neceſſary to the *animal* Life; intirely freed from all Inclinations and Appetites to ſuch Pleaſures, as are now the Snares and Temptations of the Soul; and, being perfectly *ſubdued to the Spirit, ſhall obey it in all its godly Motions*, and become a joyful joint Inſtrument with it in the Praiſe and Glory of God, for ever and ever. Such are the glorious Acceſſions and Improvements, which the Scripture mentions as accruing to good Men at the Reſurrection; but then (*k*) we may obſerve, that theſe belong ſimply to the Body, which is thus refined and *ſublimated*, and ſo prepared to ſuſtain the Joys of Heaven, which otherwiſe it could not do; but that no ſuch Improvements are mentioned of the Soul, which we may take for a plain Intimation, how noble and excellent a Being the Soul is in its *original* Nature. It is *breathed* from God, and impreſſed with his *Image*, and that Image imports no leſs than ſuch Perfections, as are *divine*: And, accordingly the Soul is in itſelf *incorruptible* and *Immortal*, and of an immenſe *Capacity* both to know and to enjoy. Indeed it is conſtituted to ſee through the Body, as through its *Glaſs*, and that Glaſs at preſent is very *dark*, but when once that Glaſs ſhall come to be *brightened*, ſo ſoon as the Soul ſhall be diſcharged from the *Groſſneſs* of Fleſh; and the *Cloud* of Paſſions, and the *Stains* of Sin, it will need no other *Elevation* to behold the Face of God, no other *Capacity* to comprehend all the Treaſures of Wiſdom, no other *Strength* to bear the Weight of eternal Glory.

And the Wicked at the Reſurrection.

What *Alterations* ſhall paſs upon the *Wicked* at their Reſurrection, the Scripture is

(*d*) *Maynard*'s Ser. Vol. I. (*e*) Iſa. xl. 31. (*f*) Rev. vii. 16. (*g*) xxi. 4. (*h*) *Calamy*'s Ser. (*i*) Gal. v. 17. (*k*) *Young*'s Ser. Vol. I.

is not ſo *particular*, but as it informs us in general, that (*l*) they *ſhall awake to Shame and everlaſting Contempt*; that they (*m*) ſhall come forth to the *Reſurrection of Damnation*; and (*n*) *be caſt into a Lake of everlaſting Fire*; we may reaſonably conclude, that they ſhall be raiſed in a full *Capacity* to ſuffer the dreadful Execution of their *Doom*, i. e. with an exquiſite *Senſe* to feel, and an invincible *Strength* to ſuſtain the Torment of eternal Fire; that, as the Saints ſhall have their Bodies arrayed with different Degrees of Glory (even *as one Star differeth from another Star* in Brightneſs) according to the different Perfections of their Souls; ſo, that Shame and Confuſion of Face, which will ſeize upon the ungodly, as well as the Anguiſh and Agonies of their Minds, will be proportionable to the *Heinouſneſs* of their Guilt; and that therefore the Reſurrection, which carries ſo much Comfort and Joy with it to the good Chriſtian, will be a *Curſe*, inſtead of a Bleſſing, to thoſe, that live and die in their Sins, when they ſhall find, that they have only been fetched from the Impriſonment of the Grave, in order to Judgment and Execution; that their Life and Senſes are reſtored to them, only that they may be *ſuſceptible* of Puniſhment; and their being perpetuated, that they may remain within the *Sphere* of everlaſting Vengeance. But of this more hereafter.

A Recapitulation *of the whole.*

WHAT has been ſaid is ſufficient, as I take it, for the Expoſition of the *eleventh* Article, *the Reſurrection of the Body*, wherein we profeſs moſt ſtedfaſtly to believe —" That, as *it is appointed for all Men* " *once to die*, ſo it is determined (as ap- " pears from the Word of God, as well " as the Light of Reaſon) that all Men " ſhould riſe from Death, and that in a " *real* not a *figurative* Senſe, and in the " very Bodies, that were laid in the Grave, " not in any others of a *different* Origi- " nal, that God may make for them; that, " as our Souls, when ſeparated from our " Bodies are *in the Hand* of God, ſo will " he, at the Concluſion of the World, and " not before, collect all the *conſtituent* " Parts, whereof our Bodies were com- " poſed, be they never ſo much diſſolv- " ed into *Duſt*, ſcattered in the *Air*, " mixed with other *Matter*, transformed " into other *Creatures*, or even incorpo- " rated with the *Fleſh* of other Men; that " theſe Remains of our Bodies, being " all viſible to his *omniſcient* Eye, ſhall, " by his *almighty Power*, be brought to- " gether again, each Part to its reſpective " Body, reſtored to its former *Figure*, and " re-united to its proper Soul: And that, " at this Reſurrection, which ſhall be *uni- " verſal*, no Man excepted, no Fleſh left " in the Grave, by the *working of the* " *ſame almighty Power*, he ſhall, in a Mo- " ment, change the Bodies of the Righte- " ous into a Nature ſo active and vigorous, " ſo bright and beautiful, ſo refined and " ſpiritual, that they ſhall, in ſome Mea- " ſure, reſemble our Lord's *glorified* Bo- " dy, whilſt thoſe of the Wicked ſhall " be made *paſſive* and *immortal*, able to " feel and to endure their Puniſhment " for ever, ſo that this wonderful Event " will be to the *one* the greateſt *Bleſſing*, " and to the other the greateſt *Curſe*: And " the proper Reſult of theſe Conſiderations " ſhould be—a devout *Admiration* of the " Wiſdom and Power of God, who has " every Particle of Duſt, belonging to " our Bodies, under his Inſpection and " Care, and will at the laſt Day bring them " all together again, and re-unite them; " thankful *Acknowledgments* for the graci- " ous Work of our *Redemption*, accom- " pliſhed by him, (*o*) *who hath aboliſhed* " *Death* for us, and *brought Life and Im- " mortality to Light through the Goſpel*; " invincible *Courage* under all Perſecutions " for *Righteouſneſs Sake*, in Imitation of " thoſe, who ſubmitted to (*p*) *be tortured*, " *not accepting Deliverance, that they* " *might obtain a better Reſurrection*; " ſtrong *Conſolation* in all the outward " Troubles and Calamities of Life, un- " der which we muſt *not faint*, becauſe " (*q*) *we believe verily to ſee the Goodneſs* " *of the Lord in the Land of the Liv- " ing*; a willing *Reſignation* of our Lives, " whenever it ſhall pleaſe God to call " for us, as being always in Readineſs " to depart, and (*r*) *waiting for the Adop- " tion, to wit, the Redemption of our* " *Body*; *Solace and Comfort* under the " Loſs

(*l*) Dan. xii. 2. (*m*) John v. 29. (*n*) Rev. xx. 15. (*o*) 2 Tim. i. 10. (*p*) Heb. xi. 35. (*q*) Pſal. xxvii. 13. (*r*) Rom. viii. 23.

" Loſs of our deareſt Friends and Relati-
" ons, who are now indeed, for a while,
" parted from us, but will ſoon return
" again, and ſo with them we ſhall have
" a joyful meeting *at the Reſurrection of*
" *the Juſt*; *Reverence and Regard* to
" theſe Bodies of ours, that they be
" not defiled and polluted with Sin, ſince
" they muſt all, in the ſame Subſtance,
" riſe again, and *appear before the Judg-*
" *ment-Seat of Chriſt*; a diligent Prepa-
" ration of ourſelves againſt that great
" Day, ſince (*s*) *as the Tree falleth, there*
" *ſhall it be*, and between Death and
" Judgment there are no Opportunities
" of making Amends for our preſent Tranſ-
" greſſions; and laſtly, an awful con-
" ſtant *Senſe upon our Minds* of that amaz-
" ing Sight, when all Mankind ſhall
" at once ſtart out of their Graves, and
" of the mighty Difference, that ſhall
" then appear in the Looks of the Right-
" eous and the Wicked, when (*t*) *the*
" *Bones of the Dead ſhall flouriſh like*
" *an Herb, and the Lord ſhall be known*
" *towards his Servants, and his Indigna-*
" *tion towards his Enemies.*"

(*s*) Eccles. xi. 3.

(*t*) Iſa. lxvi. 14.



CHAP. XII.

ARTICLE XII.

And * the Life everlasting.

The EXPOSITION.

WE are now come to the *laſt Privilege* mentioned in the Creed, to which we are intitled by being made *Members* of Chriſt's *holy Catholick Church*, and that is *Life eternal*; a Privilege, which though in ſome Meaſure diſcovered to former Ages before the Chriſtian Diſpenſation, yet was it never plainly revealed until (*a*) *the Grace of God, which bringeth Salvation, appeared unto all Men*, or, in other Words, until our bleſſed Saviour came down from Heaven (*b*) *to bring Life and Immortality to Light through the Goſpel.*

In what Senſe *the Words of this Article are to be underſtood.*

LIFE indeed, as it includes in it every Thing that is pleaſant and delightful to human Nature, can, leaſt of all, belong to thoſe, who are under the Sentence and Inflict of Condemnation; and yet, if we conſider the Relation, that this *Article* bears to what immediately goes before it, the *Reſurrection of the dead*, and that, in the Reſurrection, all, both bad and good, are to be reſtored to Life again, which Life will be *everlaſting*, or, (what is all one) will never ceaſe, becauſe the Soul and Body, then reunited, are never more to be diſſolved, we ſhall find Reaſon to think, that, as the Reſurrection includes *all*, ſo *everlaſting Life* (meaning by Life no more than the ſimple *Duration* of a Perſon's being) may be equally extenſive to *all*, and that the *Compilers* of the Creed, in this Article, made Choice of a Phraſe expreſſive of the State of the Righteous, rather than the Wicked in the World to come, not with a Deſign to exclude the *latter*, but to put us in Mind, that the *former* of theſe was primarily intended by God's gracious Purpoſe in Chriſt, and that it is purely their own Fault, when, by an obſtinate Perſiſtance in Wickedneſs, Men defeat his kind Intention toward them, and draw down everlaſting Puniſhment upon themſelves. In this *Latitude* are the Words of the Creed to be underſtood, as they denote a future Duration, not only of Happineſs, but alſo of Miſery, and, conſequently, declare, that there will be another Life after this, and *that* attended with Rewards and Puniſhments, both *proportionate* to Mens Deſervings here, and both *eternal*.

Arguments for a future State *from* Reaſon,

IT has been the general Obſervation and Complaint of Mankind, that, in this Life, there is little or no Diſcrimination (*c*) *between the Righteous and the Wicked; between him, that ſerveth God, and him, that ſerveth him not*; nay, that (*d*) *there is a Vanity* (as the *Royal Preacher* terms it) *which is done upon the Earth*, viz. *that there are juſt Men, to whom it happeneth according to the Work of the Wicked, and again that there are wicked Men, to whom it happeneth*

* This laſt *Article*, though not found in all, (for ſeveral end with the *Reſurrection*, as appears from *Ruffinus*) was yet expreſſed in many ancient *Creeds*; *in ſome*, by Way of *Addition*, *and the Life everlaſting*, and in others, by Way of Conjunction with the former Article, *the Reſurrection of the Body unto everlaſting Life*. Upon what Occaſion the whole Article was firſt introduced, the Author of the *Critical Hiſtory of this Creed* informs us, *viz.* that it was in Oppoſition to the *Hereſy* of ſome *Gnoſticks*, who, dividing all Mankind into three Parts, *earthly*, *animal*, and *ſpiritual*, affirmed, that the *firſt* of theſe, and Part of the *ſecond*, would be *annihilated*, and reduced to nothing by the general *Conflagration* at the laſt Day, whilſt only the *ſpiritual*, and Part of the *animal*, ſhould be made *immortal* and *eternal*; and therefore we find *Iræneus*, a Contemporary with theſe *Hereticks*, and a great Confuter of them, in his own Creed, thus *paraphraſtically* expreſſing the final Determination of every Man, viz. *that, after the Reſurrection, Chriſt ſhall adminiſter a righteous Judgment unto all. Wicked, unjuſt, ungoldly, and blaſphemous Men he ſhall ſend into everlaſting Fire; but unto the Juſt, and Righteous, and thoſe, that keep his Commandments, he ſhall give Immortality and Glory*, Lib. 1. C. 2. Though other learned Men are of Opinion, that it was of more early Admiſſion into the Body of the Creed. *Pearſon* on the Creed, *King*'s Crit. Hiſt. and *Grabe*'s Annot. on Bp. *Bull*'s Judgment.

(*a*) Tit. ii. 11. (*b*) 2 Tim. i. 10. (*c*) Mal. iii. 18. (*d*) Eccleſ. viii. 14.

eth

eth according to the Work of the Righteous, as if the *one* were the Favourites of Heaven, and the *other* (who leaſt of all deſerve ſuch Treatment) its utter Enemies. Now ſuch a *promiſcuous* Diſpenſation of the Goods and Evils of this Life can never accord with God's *providential* Juſtice and Goodneſs, without the Suppoſition of a *Retribution* to be made in the next, which will ſettle and adjuſt theſe *Inequalities*, and, by that Means, clear and vindicate the divine Attributes. And as the Courſe of this World, our preſent State and Exiſtence remind us of a Life to come: For, (*e*) who can think it becoming the great God of Heaven and Earth, or ſuitable to his infinite Wiſdom to create ſo noble a Being as Man, who is ſo capable of ſerving and praiſing his Creator to all Eternity, only to tread this *Stage* of Earth a few Days, and then make his *Exit* for ever. Nay, conſidering how much of theſe few Days is ſpent in our Infancy and Childhood, in Sleep and Inſenſibility, or elſe in Troubles and Pains, which imbitter our Lives, and, at the ſame Time, ſhorten them, the Share of our *real* Exiſtence in this World, will appear ſo ſmall and inconſiderable, that we may well look upon it as an Employ far beneath the divine *Majeſty* to concern himſelf in the Production of ſuch inſignificant Creatures if they be born only to die and never to live again. In ourſelves we perceive ſomething vaſtly ſuperior to this, *viz.* a Principle of Reaſon to judge what is right or wrong, a Power of determining our Actions upon moral Motives, and a Conſciouſneſs of their being blameable or praiſe-worthy according to the Motives, that produce them: (*f*) Conſequently, we cannot but ſuppoſe, that as there is an *higher* Being, from whom we received all our Powers and Faculties, at ſome Time or other, there will be an Examination or Enquiry made into the Grounds, and Motives, and Circumſtances of our ſeveral Actions, and a ſuitable Judgment paſſed upon them. But now why are we made accountable Creatures, with Reaſon to judge for ourſelves, and with Liberty of Choice to determine our Actions? Why do we find implanted in our Nature (as we ſhall ſee hereafter) ſo earneſt a Deſire of *Immortality*? Why are our Thoughts daily employed in boundleſs Reſearches after Happineſs? Why do we feel in us ſo ſtrong a Tendency towards a more perfect State? When we have atchieved any great and virtuous Action, why is our Soul lifted up with a bleſſed Hope and Expectation? Or when we have committed any heinous Wickedneſs, why is our Heart ſmitten with ill Aboadings of what will follow? Are not all theſe Preſages of a future State? And has not God interwoven them in the very Conſtitution of our Nature? If he has, it is not to be doubted, (*g*) but that he has prepared Objects, that are every Way ſuitable to them, otherwiſe we muſt allow, that we are tantalized with vain Hopes, and alarmed with falſe Fears; by a *natural* Principle inclined to that, which we can never attain, and, conſequently, fram'd, as it were, on purpoſe to be tormented between theſe two Paſſions, *Deſire* and *Deſpair*, an earneſt *Propenſion* after Happineſs, and an utter *Incapacity* of ever enjoying it.

Univerſal Conſent,

UPON theſe and ſuch like Conſiderations it doubtleſs was, that * the moſt *barbarous* as well as the moſt *civilized* Nations, and, among theſe, the Vulgar, as well as the Wiſe and Learned, did generally acknowledge a future State; that the more pious and virtuous Men were, the more did they believe a Life to come, and made the bare Contemplation of it, not only a great Pleaſure and Satisfaction to their Minds, but a ſolid Foundation likewiſe of their Hopes and Expectations after Death, as well as a mighty Encouragement to their Practice of all

* Among ſome of the rudeſt People, that we read of, this Cuſtom has prevailed, that, when their King happens to die, ſeveral of his Servants are immediately killed, that they may attend him in the other World. The Natives of *Newfoundland* generally hold, that the Dead go into a far Country, and there have the Fruition of their Friends. The Inhabitants of *Paraguay*, in *America*, talk of a *Tradition* among them, that certain Prieſts ſhall arrive in their Country, and teach them the *Principles* of a new Religion, whereby they ſhall attain to Happineſs in another World; and (to name no more) in the Kingdom of *Loango*, in the upper *Ethiopia*, the Inhabitants of *Malembra* ſet apart a *fifth* Day for publick Worſhip; at which Time, one, in a ſolemn Speech, exhorts them to the Practice of Virtue, by promiſing to them the Certainty of Rewards and Puniſhments in a future State, terrifying them with the Conſideration of the miſerable Condition of thoſe, who are obliged to live with *Benimbe*, i. e. the Devil, and ſolacing their Minds with the Hopes of enjoying the Society of *Zaampoango*, that is, God, or the Maker of the World. *Edwards*'s Body Vol. II.

(*e*) *Edwards*'s Body Vol. II. (*f*) *Clarke*'s Ser. at *Boyle*'s Lect. (*g*) *Wilkins*'s Nat. Rel.

all moral Virtue, while they were alive: For ſo we find *Plato* exhorting his Followers in theſe Words; (*h*) *Since they, who in the Games hope to obtain a Victory, in ſuch poor Matters, as wreſtling, running, and the like, think not much to prepare themſelves for the Conteſt by great Temperance, and Abſtinence, ſhall not our Scholars, in the Study of Virtue, have Courage and Reſolution enough, to perſevere with Patience for ſo noble a Prize, as will attend them after Death?* Words, that have a near Similitude to thoſe of St. *Paul*; (*i*) *know ye not, that they, who run in a Race, run all; and every Man, that ſtriveth for the Maſtery, is temperate in all Things: Now they do it to obtain a corruptible Crown, but we an incorruptible:* And this leads us to obſerve what the Scripture has taught us in Confirmation of a future State.

And Scripture Teſtimony.

St. *Paul* informs us, that (*k*) *eternal Life was promiſed by God* (not *before the World began*, as our *Tranſlators* render it, for then there were no Men to whom ſuch Promiſe might be made, but) *before ancient Times*, as the Words will bear, or *from the Beginning of the World. Adam*, by his Tranſgreſſion, forfeited his Title to Immortality; (*l*) but as the Church has always believed, that, upon his Repentance, God received him into Favour again, and admitted him to the Mercy of the *ſecond Covenant* in *Chriſt Jeſus*; ſo it is not to be doubted, but that he was pleaſed graciouſly to acquaint him with it, which *Adam* would not fail to communicate to his Family: So that he, and his Poſterity were ſufficiently inſtructed in the Doctrine of another Life after Death, a Reſurrection of the Body, though committed to the Duſt, and a Redintegration of our Natures, when God ſhould re-unite their conſtituent Parts, and make us again (*m*) *the Image of his own Eternity.*

THE *ſeventh from Adam was Enoch*, a Preacher of a *future Judgment* in the Life to come, as (*n*) St. *Jude* deſcribes him, and whoſe *Tranſlation* was a Seal and Confirmation of the Doctrine, which he taught to the *Antediluvian* World, while he continued upon Earth. Of his miraculous Tranſlation, *Noah*, who lived ſo near the Time, cannot be ſuppoſed ignorant, or unmindful to tranſmit it to his Poſterity, ſince *Moſes*, ſo many Ages after, had Knowledge of it, and, in his Writings, has delivered it down to all ſucceeding Generations: And, whether it was in Virtue of this *Tradition*, or ſome additional *Revelation*, that God might vouchſafe the Patriarchs after the Flood, ſo it is, that the Author to the *Hebrews* has recorded them, as enduring Hardſhips, and working Wonders from a Principle of Faith, whereby (*o*) *they confeſſed that they were Strangers and Pilgrims on Earth*, but, having *reſpect unto the Recompence of Reward, they were mindful of a better Country, that is an heavenly; and looked for a City, which hath Foundations, whoſe Builder and Maker is God.*

THAT in the Writings of the *old Teſtament*, the *Jews* had ſufficient Intimation given them of the Reality of a future State is evident from the Anſwer, which *Abraham* returns to the rich Man in the Parable, deſiring that a Meſſenger might be ſent to his Father's Houſe to inform his Brethren of the ſad Condition he was in, and to prevent their coming into the ſame Place of Torments, (*p*) *they have Moſes and the Prophets, let them hear them*; and again (when the poor Wretch urged his Requeſt) *if they hear not Moſes and the Prophets, neither will they be perſuaded, though one roſe from the Dead*; which muſt needs be a plain and convincing Proof, that a future State, even that of *infernal* Puniſhment, was diſcovered in the Writings of *Moſes*, and ſome other Books of the *Old Teſtament*, otherwiſe the *rich Man*'s Relations would never have been remitted to them, as ſufficient to inſtruct them, (even above the Teſtimony of any ſpecial Meſſenger from the other World,) in the Truth and Reality of this great Article.

THE Writings of the *Prophets* are in many Places obſcure and *allegorical*, and therefore not ſo proper to be brought in *Evidence* of this Doctrine; but of the Royal Pſalmiſt we may make this Obſervation, that in all thoſe Places, where he ſhews the Vanity and Shortneſs of this Life, and its Deſtitution of all ſolid and ſubſtantial Happineſs, and yet, with the ſame Breath, ſets forth the great Bleſſedneſs of the Faithful in their Truſt and Dependance on God's Goodneſs and Mercy; in all theſe Places, I ſay, he evidently points his *Finger* towards

(*h*) De Legibus L. 8. (*i*) 1 Cor. ix. 24, 25. (*k*) Tit. i. 2. (*l*) Bp. *Bull*'s Ser. Vol. I.
(*m*) Wiſd. ii. 23. (*n*) Jude 14. (*o*) Heb. xi. 10, &c. (*p*) Luke xvi. 29, &c.

towards Heaven, and directs our Thoughts to the Felicities of a future State; even as his Son *Solomon* reminds us of that great and important Day, *when God ſhall bring every Work into Judgment, with every ſecret Thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.* The Truth is, (*q*) the Doctrine of a future State and final Judgment, were the *Catholick* Profeſſion of the *Jewiſh* Church, and ſo continued, till after the Return of the Captivity, when there aroſe among them the *Hereſy* of the *Sadducees*, who believed neither the Immortality of the Soul, nor the Reſurrection of the Body, nor any Judgment to come; *but theſe* (*as* (*r*) *Joſephus* obſerves) were *very few in Number, compared with the reſt* of the *Jews, and, when any of them were admitted to Offices of publick Truſt in the Government, they were forced to diſſemble their Faith, (or rather Infidelity) and to ſubſcribe to the received Doctrine of the Church, otherwiſe the People would by no Means have endured them.*

WHAT Evidence we have from the Writings of the *New Teſtament* concerning the Truth of this Doctrine, it is needleſs to recite, when we find the *Author and Finiſher of our Faith*, who by his own *Reſurrection* overcame Death, and by his *Aſcenſion*, has opened unto us the Gates of everlaſting Life, addreſſing himſelf to his Diſciples in this Manner —— (*s*) *In my Father's Houſe are many Manſions: If it were not ſo, I would have told you. I go to prepare a Place for you, and if I go, and prepare a Place for you, I will come again, and receive you, that where I am, there ye may be alſo:* When we find St. *Paul* deſiring (*t*) *to depart, and to be with Chriſt, which is far better*, becauſe (*u*) *we know, that, if our earthly Tabernacle be diſſolved, we have an Houſe, not made with Hands, eternal in the Heavens*; St. *Peter*, (*x*) *melting the preſent Elements with fervent Heat, with Fire conſuming this Earth, and all the Works that are therein*, and then, *according to Promiſe, looking for a new Heaven, and new Earth, wherein dwelleth Righteouſneſs*; and St. *John*, deſcribing (*y*) *the holy City, the new Jeruſalem, coming down from God out of Heaven, prepared as a Bride, adorned for her Huſband.* When we find this, I ſay, and much more to the ſame Purpoſe, we cannot but conclude, that, as a more perfect Diſcovery of the *inviſible* World was one great End of the Chriſtian Diſpenſation, ſo the *evangelical* Writers have given us undeniable Demonſtrations of the Truth of our future Exiſtence, whether it be in an happy or unhappy Condition; which is the next Thing we are to conſider.

The Reality of Hell Torments.

THAT, in this future State, bold and impious Offenders are to be doomed to great and grievous Puniſhment, in a Place appointed for that Purpoſe, is a Truth, not only delivered in * the *Fictions* of the Heathen *Poets*, but recorded in the moſt ſerious Writings of their Sages; and therefore we find (*z*) *Plato*, the great Father of Philoſophy, telling us, that *there ever was this Law and Conſtitution among the Gods, that thoſe, who lived righteouſly and piouſly, when they have finiſhed their Courſe here, ſhall go into the Iſlands of the Bleſſed, and there live in Happineſs, free from all Evil; but that thoſe, who lived unjuſtly and impiouſly, ſhall be ſent into the Priſon of Juſtice and Puniſhment, which is called Tartarus.* The more Reaſon we have to expect, that the *Jews*, to whom were committed the *Oracles of God*, ſhould conſtantly profeſs, that as (*a*) *the Lord is known to execute Judgment, the Wicked*, when they die, *ſhall be turned into Hell, and all the People that forget God.* For (*b*) *Tophet* (a † fit *Emblem* of infernal Flames) *is ordained of old,*

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(*q*) Bp. *Bull's* Ser. Vol. I. (*r*) Antiq. Jud. L. 18. (*s*) John xiv. 2, 3. (*t*) Phil. i. 23.
(*u*) 2 Cor. v. 1. (*x*) 2 Pet. iii. 10, &c. (*y*) Rev. xxi. 2. (*z*) in *Gorgiâ*.
(*a*) Pſal. ix. 16, 17. (*b*) Iſa. xxx. 33.

* The Fictions of the Poets were ſuch as theſe —— That, there was a *Ferry-man* to carry Souls over the *Stygian* Lake, and to land them in Hell, where there were *three Judges* appointed to examine and diſcuſs their Faults, and to aſſign Puniſhments according to their Offences; that, there the Criminals are worried by *Cerberus*, and the Furies fall on them without Mercy, and laſh and ſcourge their guilty Souls. There *Danaus*'s Daughters are forced to draw Water in *Sieves*, which cannot be filled, and yet are doomed to that Taſk for ever. There *Tantalus* ſtands up to the Chin in Water, and is always catching at that, which he muſt never enjoy. *Ixion*'s Taſk is to turn about a maſſy *Wheel* continually. *Siſyphus* rolls a great Stone up a ſteep Hill, which always returns, and makes his Labour endleſs. *Prometheus*'s Heart is gnawn by an *Eagle*, and *Tityus* has a *Vulture* feeding on his Liver, with many more Inventions of the like Nature. *Edwards*'s Body Vol. II.

† *Tophet* was a Place, in the Valley of *Hinnon*, near *Jeruſalem*, where the idolatrous *Iſraelites made their Children*

ole, the Pile whereof is Fire, and much Wood, and the Breath of the Lord, like a Stream of Brimſtone, ſhall kindle it. In Conformity hereunto the Place in the New Teſtament (*c*) is repreſented by *Gehenna*, as it is in the Original, by (*d*) *an Abyſs*, or *bottomleſs Pit*, by (*e*) a *Furnace of Fire*, and by a (*f*) *Lake burning with Fire and Brimſtone*, which is a plain Alluſion to the Place, where *Sodom* and *Gomorrah* once ſtood, but was afterwards turned into a Lake, (and ſo continues to this Day) by Streams of ſulphureous Fire, which, in plentiful Showers, were rained down upon it from Heaven.

A Deſcription of them.

IT is beyond the Power of Language to expreſs the Dreadfulneſs of *their* Condition, who, as the Apoſtle ſpeaks, (*g*) *ſhall be puniſhed with everlaſting Deſtruction, from the Preſence of the Lord, and from the Glory of his Power:* Shall be confined to *a Place*, which *exhibits* nothing, but one continued Scene of Suffering; where nothing *appears*, but dire Images of the divine Wrath and Vengeance; nothing is *heard*, but Shrieks and diſmal Lamentations, nothing *felt*, but inceſſant Torments and Agonies, nor any Thing *perceived*, but what is both painful to Senſe, and frightful to Reflection: *Where* all the Workers of Iniquity, being met together, and, from the Senſe of their Sufferings full of Malice and Exaſperation againſt each other, will be ſure to maintain a continual Intercourſe of mutual Upbraidings, and Vexations, while the Devils, that ſtand by, ſhall laugh at their Calamity, and, in Hopes of alleviating their own, ingeminate Inflictions on all *ſuch* unhappy Wretches, as ſhall be ſubmitted to their Tyranny: *Where*, of all others, they will be the worſt *Companions* to themſelves, when once they reflect on their paſt Enjoyments, and preſent Sufferings, and when all the Paſſions of Shame, and Sorrow, and Remorſe, of Deſpair, and Fury, and Madneſs ſhall, at once, be let looſe upon them, to make them abhor, and curſe themſelves for being the Cauſe of all the Evils they ſuffer, and to rage, and rave, and blaſpheme God himſelf, for the Severity of his Juſtice in inflicting it: *Where* the Wrath of Heaven is poured out upon the Miſerable without Mercy, and without Pity, without any Mixture of Eaſe, or Hope of Mitigation; but Woe ſucceeding Woe in one continued Courſe of Torments; the *Worm ſtill gnawing*, and *the Fire ſtill burning*, and the Smoke of the Furnace aſcending up for ever and ever; and (what comes to compleat all this Miſery) *where* theſe Torments and Agonies, *inceſſant* as they are, will be *everlaſting*, and, after as many Millions of Millions of Ages, as there are Stars in the Firmament, or Sands on the Sea-Shore, as paſt and gone, ſhall be as far diſtant from their *Period*, as they were the very firſt Moment that they commenced.

Their Eternity.

AN *everlaſting Life* of ſuch Miſery as this, in the very Contemplation of it, is ſo full of Horror and Amazement, that it is no Wonder, if, out of an Exceſs of Compaſſion (as (*b*) St. *Auſtin* ſays of *Origen*,) ſome Men, in all Ages, have found themſelves inclinable either to leſſen the *Degree*, or ſhorten the *Duration* of future Puniſhments, though the Language of the Scripture is intirely againſt them: For when we read of (*i*) *eternal Damnation*, (*k*) *everlaſting Deſtruction*, (*l*) *everlaſting Fire, that ſhall never be extinguiſhed*, and (*m*) *everlaſting Chains under Darkneſs*, where the Wicked (*n*) *ſhall be tormented Day and Night for ever and ever:* When, in the frightful Deſcription, which our Saviour gives us of the State and Condition of the Damned (*o*) *in Hell, where the Worm dieth not, and the Fire is not quenched*, (a Remark, which he *thrice* repeats within the Compaſs of *five* Verſes, to make us take the greater Notice of it) and when, in that ſolemn Repreſentation, which he makes

Children paſs through the Fire to Molech, 2 Kings xxiii. 10. It has its Name from a *Drum* or Tabret, which the Idolaters played upon, all the while that the Children were ſacrificed to this *Idol*, that the tender Parents might not hear their Cries. In the Reign of King *Joſiah*, it was made a *Dunghil* and a common Receptacle for all Filth and Garbage. He ordered it to be a Place, where Carcaſſes ſhould be diſpoſed of, and Malefactors buried, 2 *Kings* xxiii. 20. And when theſe Bodies were putrefied, their Bones were burnt here, for which Purpoſe a perpetual Fire was kept. Upon theſe Accounts not only the *Jewiſh* Doctors and Rabbies, but even the common People (as Dr. *Lightfoot*, in his *Preface to the Harmony of the New Teſtament*, has ſufficiently ſhewn) were wont to call *Hell* by that Name; and therefore it is no Wonder, that our bleſſed Saviour ſhould uſe *Gehenna* (a *Derivative* from *Hinnon*) in the ſame Signification. *Edwards's* Body Vol. II.

(*c*) Matt. v. 22. (*d*) Rev. ix. 1. (*e*) Matt. xiii. 42. (*f*) Rev. xxi. 8.
(*g*) 2 Theſſ. i. 9. (*h*) De Civit. Dei L. 21. (*i*) Mark iii. 29. (*k*) 2 Theſſ. i. 9.
(*l*) Matt. xviii. 8. (*m*) Jude 6. (*n*) Rev. xx. 10. (*o*) Mark ix. 44.

makes of the *future Judgment*, after the Sentence pronounced againſt the Wicked, *depart from me, ye Curſed*, &c. he tells us, that (*p*) *theſe ſhall go into everlaſting Puniſhment; but the Righteous into Life eternal.* How can we think, but that the Deſign of all this is to confirm our Belief in the Truth we are now aſſerting, *viz.* that the Pains of Hell are for ever, and admit of no Termination; for, in this laſt cited Paſſage, we may obſerve, (*q*) that the ſame Word in the *Original* is applied to both States, and ſhould have been rendered alike in both Clauſes: If therefore *eternal* Life imports a bleſſed Immortality, with all the Delight, Satisfaction, and Glory, that is *the Inheritance of the Saints in Light*; by Parity of Reaſon, *everlaſting Puniſhment* muſt denote that Tribulation, and Anguiſh, that Horror, and Deſpair, which will then ſeize upon the Wicked, and make them *eternally miſerable*, even as the Righteous ſhall be *happy* in the ſtricteſt Acceptation of Eternity.

And the Reaſons *for it.*

Now the Reaſon, why *eternal Miſery* was made one of the *Sanctions* of the divine Commands, was to enforce Man's Obedience. (*r*) A leſſer Penalty than this God would have enacted, if a leſſer would have anſwered the Purpoſe: but even this (as terrible as it is) we find, in ſome Caſes, is not ſufficient to awe Mankind into a Compliance with his Will. Since God therefore, as the ſupreme Legiſlator and Governor of the World, was obliged to enforce his Laws with an Eternity of Puniſhment, we cannot conceive, how it ſhould be inconſiſtent with any of his other Attributes, to inflict the Penalty, that his *Wiſdom* has decreed, and his *Word* denounced. Human Laws, we may obſerve, make very ſevere Penalties againſt ſome particular Crimes. To *rob* a Man of a ſmall Sum of Money, which does not much impair his Circumſtances, is an Offence, that bears no Proportion to the Forfeiture of another's Life; and yet the Wiſdom of the Legiſlature makes it *Death*, becauſe it tends to render Property, and whatever is valuable in Life, precarious. The Penalty of human Laws, we may farther obſerve, riſes in Proportion to the *Dignity* of the Perſon, againſt whom the Offence is committed. (*s*) A *Magiſtrate* is conſidered in a Character more eminent and honourable, than any *private* Perſon, and therefore the Injuries and Indignities, offered to him, are eſteemed more heinous, and have greater Puniſhments annexed to them. How then can any Penalty be too ſevere, for Crimes committed againſt a God, *who is exalted above the higheſt Heavens*, and infinite in all Perfections? Infinite indeed muſt that Guilt be, which flies in the Face of his tremendous Majeſty; but ſince we are incapable of undergoing a Puniſhment that is infinite in *Degree*, the infinite *Duration* of it can be the only Meaſure of its *Proportion*; and this every inveterate Sinner, that goes out of the World in a State of Impenitence (even without any poſitive Infliction from God) naturally intails upon himſelf.

For if (as the *royal Preacher* obſerves) (*t*) *there is no Work, or Device, nor Knowledge, nor Wiſdom in the Grave, whither he goeth*; if when Death cloſes the Scene, the Vices, a Man dies in, are ſtamped upon the Soul in indelible Characters, and *he, that is filthy, muſt continue filthy ſtill*, then is it an undeniable Conſequence, that he, who can never ceaſe to be wicked, can never ceaſe to be miſerable, which is enough in all Reaſon to clear the divine Attributes from any ſiniſter Imputation, ſince it is no more, than what might be expected, that he ſhould for ever be excluded from Heaven, who, by a vitiated Reliſh, has diſqualified himſelf for the Fruition of it, and become eternally miſerable by ſuch Diſpoſitions and Habits, as are the proper Foundation of Hell: Eſpecially conſidering, that God, in this Life, has dealt fairly and openly with us. He hath ſet before us Life and Death; told us, that theſe are to be our Reward or Puniſhment, and ſo left us to our own Liberty, which of them to chooſe: If therefore we chooſe Death inſtead of Life, and, for the *Pleaſures of Sin, which are but for a Seaſon*, neglect the Offers of everlaſting Happineſs, it is but Juſtice in God to let us have our own Choice, to leave us (*u*) *to eat* the bitter *Fruit of our own Ways, and to be filled with our own Devices.*

Their Inequality, *and why.*

Thus it appears, both from Scripture and Reaſon, that the Puniſhment of Sinners, in the World to come, will be *eternal*; but it does not therefore follow, that it will be *equal*; for though the *Duration* of ſuffering *in all* will be the ſame, yet the *Degrees* of

(*p*) Matt. xxv. 46. (*q*) *Lupton's* Ser. (*r*) *Seed's* Ser. Vol. II. (*s*) *Lupton's* Ser. (*t*) Eccleſ. ix. 10. (*u*) Prov. i. 31.

of it will be different, according to the Nature or Malignity of their Sins. In Puniſhments, that are inflicted for the Breach of human Laws, the Proportion of ſuffering is not always adequate to the Degrees of Guilt. (x) *Murther* is, no Doubt, a more heinous Sin, than *Theft*, and, in one Thief, or one Murtherer, there are greater Aggravations, more Malice, more Wilfulneſs, more Cruelty, than in another; and yet, becauſe Men cannot judge of theſe Diſpoſitions of Mind, which, in a great Meaſure, diſtinguiſh the Guilt of each Offender, it hence comes to paſs, that different Degrees of Sin cannot be attended with different Degrees of ſuffering. But now, as the Guilt of each Tranſgreſſion, in its moſt minute Difference, muſt needs be naked and open to that God, who is *Omniſcience* itſelf, and as there can be no want of Power in a Being, that is *omnipotent*, to inflict ſuch Puniſhments, as are exactly due to each particular Offender; it muſt hence neceſſarily follow, that, in the next Life, Guilt and Miſery muſt bear Proportion, or that the Sufferings of the Damned will be more or leſs intenſe, according to the Aggravations of their Crimes. And indeed conſidering, that one great *Part* (and as ſome would have it, the *whole*) of the Puniſhment of Hell will conſiſt in the *Remorſe* of Conſcience, which ariſes from the Senſe of Guilt, and that the greater the Guilt is, the greater muſt the Remorſe be; that, if all Sin (as we find by Experience) has a natural Tendency to produce Uneaſineſs and Pain, and the greateſt Sins be apt to cauſe the greateſt Miſery; and, laſtly, if theſe Sins are ſure to produce the ſame Effect (but in an higher Degree) in the other World, where there are no Amuſements to alleviate Men's Pain and Suffering, then may we reaſonably conclude, that the greater any Man's Sins have been, the more ſevere will his Miſery be, even in the *natural* Courſe of Things. But much more ſo, when the divine Juſtice declares, that it will interpoſe to proportion his Puniſhment to his Guilt; for (y) *that Servant*, ſays our bleſſed Saviour, *who knew his Lord's Will, and prepared not himſelf, neither did according to his Will, ſhall be beaten with many Stripes; but he, that knew not, and did commit Things worthy of Stripes, ſhall be beaten with few; for unto whomſoever much is given, of him ſhall be much required.* In which Paſſage we may obſerve, that both the *Servants had committed Things worthy of Stripes*, but, becauſe the one ſinned againſt greater Light, than the other, had more Knowledge of his Maſter's Will, a greater Truſt repoſed in him, and more Opportunities of doing better, he is therefore, upon this Account, doomed to ſuffer a ſeverer Puniſhment, than the other. But enough of this *melancholy* Theme; paſs we now to the other, and more comfortable Proſpect of *Life everlaſting*, which as it includes all, that God has promiſed, or Chriſt purchaſed, or Man can be rewarded with, is therefore a brief Deſcription of all the innumerable *Beatitudes*, that are in Heaven.

The Reality *of* Heaven's Happineſs.

THAT there is a Place, appointed for the good and virtuous, where they ſhall be recompenſed after this Life, and enjoy perpetual Happineſs, is not only an Invention of the *heathen* Poets, who generally call it the *Elyſian Fields*, but a Doctrine, which the graveſt of their *Philoſophers* were wont to inculcate; and therefore it is reported (z) of *Anaxagoras*, that he uſed to point up to Heaven, and ſay, *that was his Country*; even as the poor *Americans*, though they aim not ſo high, do yet tell us of certain Hills and Mountains, where they doubt not to be happy, whenever they die. No wonder then, that we find *Jews* and *Chriſtians* ſo frequently in their Writings, making Mention of *Paradiſe*, the *Manſions* of Reſt, the *Seats of the Bleſſed*; *Abraham*'s Boſom, the *Region of the Patriarchs*, and the *Heaven of Heavens*, which is the Habitation and *Throne*, where the Prophet, in his Viſion, (a) *ſaw the ancient of Days ſitting, with thouſands miniſtring to him, and ten thouſand Times ten thouſand ſtanding before him*; where our bleſſed Lord is now ſet at his Father's (b) *right Hand, far above all Principality, and Power, and Might, and Dominion*; where (c) St. *Paul had laid up for him a Crown of Righteouſneſs, which the Lord the righteous Judge was to give him in the laſt Day*; where St. *Peter*, and (d) *all, that are begotten again unto a lively Hope through the Reſurrection of Chriſt*, are intitled to *an Inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled,*

(x) *Smallridge*'s Ser. (y) Luke xii. 47, 48. (z) Laert. de Vita Anax. (a) Dan. vii. 9, 10.
(b) Eph. i. 20, 21. (c) 2 Tim. iv. 8. (d) 1 Pet. i. 3, 4.

undefiled, that fadeth not away; and where (*e*) *to him that overcometh ſhall be given to eat of the Tree of Life, which groweth in the Paradiſe of God*, and to live in the *great City, the holy Jeruſalem*, which, according to St. *John*'s Deſcription of it, is built of (*f*) *pure Gold, as clear as Cryſtal*, and its *Streets* paved with the ſame; having its *Gates of Pearl*, and the Foundations of its Walls *garniſhed with all Manner of precious Stones.*

A Deſcription *of it.*

THE ſacred Penmen, you ſee, have employed all the Strength of Invention, and all the Power of *Metaphors*, to give us ſome Idea of the Felicities of Heaven, wherewith the Righteous ſhall be rewarded; but the Reſemblance is faint, and the Images, by which they deſcribe them, widely diſproportioned from the Originals. (*g*) That particular Apoſtle, who was privileged in the higheſt Manner, and *caught up even into the third Heaven*, could make no other Diſcovery to us, than that he had (*h*) *heard unſpeakable Words, which it is not lawful for Man to utter*; for *it* (*i*) *does not appear what we ſhall be*, what tranſcendent Heights our future Happineſs ſhall ariſe to, or what ſhall be the *Riches* and *Glory of our heavenly Inheritance*, ſays another, who was no Stranger to extraordinary Viſions and Revelations: And therefore we may conclude, that wherever we find the *beatifick* State repreſented under the Notions of Marriage Feaſts, ſumptuous Banquets, Rivers of Pleaſure, ſtately Buildings, royal Cities, Treaſures, Crowns, Thrones, Sceptres, and the like, theſe *Alluſions* (for we are not to ſuppoſe that theſe Things are actually in Heaven) are rather adapted to the Meaſure of our Apprehenſion, than to give us any adequate Conception of it, though they certainly teach us, (*k*) that all the Satisfaction, which can poſſibly reſult from the greateſt *Plenty*, the higheſt *Honour*, the moſt extenſive *Power*, every rational and truly manly *Pleaſure*, will not only be equalled, but vaſtly ſurpaſſed in that State, when our Bodies, being cloathed with Incorruption and Immortality, and our Souls, arrayed with Light and Purity, ſhall be admitted into that ſublime Region, which is the Court of the King of the Univerſe, who never ceaſes to diſplay the full Beams of his Majeſty to the Senſes of all his happy Subjects, a *Place*, which, beſides the natural Beauties and Pleaſures of it, is adorned with the illuſtrious Preſence of the *Son of God*, who, after all his Sufferings, and all his Combats with the Kingdom of Darkneſs, is there triumphantly ſet in the *Fulneſs of Power and Glory*, and made Lord and Governor, both of Angels and Men: *Where*, we ſhall come to *an innumerable Company of Angels*, thoſe *miniſtring Spirits*, (*l*) who, in our Pilgrimage here, did us many good Offices, we never knew; upon the Converſion of any Sinner, do conſtantly rejoice in Heaven; but will now much more rejoice, when we come to be Partakers of their Glory and their Converſation: *where* we ſhall *come to the general Aſſembly, and Church of the Firſt-born, written in Heaven*, and ſhall receive ineffable Pleaſure and Satisfaction in the Company of Patriarchs, and Prophets, and Apoſtles, and Martyrs, and all thoſe *burning and ſhining Lights*, whoſe Zeal for God and his Religion, in their ſeveral Generations, has embalmed their Names and Memories among all good Men: *Where*, among the *Spirits of juſt Men made perfect*, we ſhall be ſure to meet with Faithfulneſs and Truth, Freedom and Openneſs, Candor and Condeſcenſion, Humility and Meekneſs, and every good Quality, that can make Company ſweet, and Society endearing, without any Thing from *without* to annoy or diſturb it: and, laſtly, *where* all the bleſſed Aſſembly employ their *Minds* in contemplating the divine Perfections, their *Wills* in Acts of the moſt ardent Love; their *Eyes* in viewing the infinite Variety of the Creation, and their *Tongues* in ſweet Converſe with one another, but chiefly in Praiſe and Thankſgiving to the Author of their Being, and the Fountain of their Bliſs. For (*m*) *they ceaſe not Day and Night to cry out, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come*; They (*n*) *fall down, and caſt their Crowns before the Throne, ſaying, Thou art Worthy, O Lord, to receive Glory, and Honour, and Power, for thou haſt created all Things, and for thy Pleaſure they are, and were created*; and *they* (*o*) *ſing the Song of Moſes, and the Song of the Lamb, ſaying, Great and marvellous are thy Works, O Lord God Almighty, juſt and*

(*e*) Rev. ii. 7. (*f*) Rev. xxi. 10, &c. (*g*) *Carter*'s Ser. (*h*) 2 Cor. xii. 4.
(*i*) 1 John iii. 2. (*k*) *Stanhope*'s Ep. and Goſp. (*l*) *Sharpe*'s Ser. Vol. IV. (*m*) Rev. iv. 8.
(*n*) Ver. 10, 11. (*o*) Rev. xv. 3.

true are thy Ways, thou King of Saints. This cannot but produce a moſt wonderful Degree of Happineſs, and yet the Bounty of God has ſtill provided us with Pleaſures (if poſſible) of a more exalted Nature than theſe, which the Scripture expreſſes by the Phraſes of *ſeeing*, *knowing*, and *being like* God.

Of all our Senſes, ſeeing is the moſt noble and refined, the moſt critical and exact, the moſt perfect and comprehenſive, the moſt deſireable and delightful; and is therefore very properly put to ſignify that large and clear Knowledge of God, that inconceivable Pleaſure of contemplating him, and the Joy of loving, and being loved by him, which the *Sight of him, as he is* in his incomparable Nature and Perfections, lets all the Bleſſed into, and feaſts them with for ever. (*p*) Now, if the Diſcovery of ſome *metaphyſical*, or perhaps leſs important Truth in *natural Philoſophy*, is ſometimes able to fill the Mind of Man with ſo tranſporting a Joy, and to raiſe him ſo much above himſelf, that he ſhall be inſenſible of all other Impreſſions; how happy and delightful beyond all Imagination, muſt that State be, where the Rays of divine Knowledge ſhall ſpread themſelves in our Minds, not by a flow and gradual Advance, but by a direct and immediate Infuſion, and ſo make us, at once, (*q*) *able to comprehend, with all the Saints, what is the Length, and Breadth, and Depth, and Height, and to know the Love of Chriſt, which paſſeth Knowledge, and to be filled with all the Fulneſs of God:* For thus ſeeing and admiring God, how noble and wonderful will the Improvement of our Minds be, when fixed upon one only amiable Object, always contemplating with Joy unſpeakable, always adoring and loving, always copying after and approaching to the Sum of all Perfection until we become like him in Purity and Holineſs, in Love and Truth, in Felicity and Joy, and, *by* (*r*) *beholding his Glory* (according to the Apoſtle's Diction) *with open Face, as in a Glaſs, we are inſenſibly changed into the ſame Image, from Glory to Glory, by the Spirit of the Lord?*

Its Eternity. This then is a compendious Account of the ſupreme *Beatitude* of Heaven, we ſhall *ſee*, and *know*, and *be like* God; be admitted into his Preſence, and transformed into his Nature, only we are to add this one endearing Circumſtance, that all this Felicity is to *laſt for ever*, without Interruption or Abatement, without Diminution or Decay, without the leaſt Interval of Sorrow or Grief, or any Approach to a Period or End: For it is the peculiar Excellency of our Reward, that it is not only an *exceeding*, (*s*) but an *eternal Weight of Glory*, an (*t*) *Inheritance, that fadeth not*, a Life that does not waſte, and (*u*) *a Joy, which no one taketh from us.* And indeed were it not ſo, or could the bleſſed Inhabitants of Heaven conceive any Thing, either *within* or *without*, that could unſettle their Eſtate, or deprive them of their Happineſs, the very Apprehenſion of this would caſt a Shade over the Glories of the Place, and give a ſecret Damp to all its Felicities. For ſuch is the Nature of Man, that the more tranſcendent the Felicity is, the more pungent will the Fear be of parting with it, though at never ſo great a Diſtance. But now, (*x*) on the contrary, when theſe celeſtial Beings conſider, that they ſhall never be leſs happy, than they are now, but continually more and more ſo, the pleaſing *Remembrance* and *Experience* of what is *paſt* and *preſent* will heighten, and enlarge the Proſpect of what is to *come*, and the abſolute Aſſurance of an endleſs *Futurity* will ſecure them from all Fear of Loſs, or Thought of Depravation; and in this Condition every Capacity will be extended to the utmoſt, and with infinite Delight, will drink of the Rivers of Pleaſure, that *are at God's right Hand*, becauſe they know they cannot fail, or be exhauſted, but muſt, of Neceſſity, run with a full Torrent for evermore.

Its Inequality and why. But, though the Happineſs of the Saints in Heaven is, in every one, to be *eternal*, yet it does not therefore follow, that, in all Reſpects, it will be *equal*: for, as there is (*y*) *one Glory of the Sun, another Glory of the Moon, and another Glory of the Stars*, ſo ſhall one Saint, according to the Meaſure of his Proficiency in Virtue and Godlineſs here, differ from another Saint in the Degree of his Felicity hereafter. When therefore we find the Angel in the Prophet *Daniel*, declaring, that, of

(*p*) *Fiddes's* Body, Vol. I. (*q*) Eph. iii. 18, 19. (*r*) 2 Cor. iii. 18. (*s*) 2 Cor. iv. 17.
(*t*) 1 Pet. i. 4. (*u*) John xvi. 22. (*x*) *Carter's* Ser. (*y*) 1 Cor. xv. 41.

of thoſe, who ſhall (z) *awake to everlaſting Life, they, that be wiſe, ſhall ſhine, as the Brightneſs of the Firmament, and they, that turn many to Righteouſneſs, as the Stars for ever and ever*; even as our Saviour tells his Apoſtles, (a) *ye, that have followed me, * in the Regeneration, when the Son of Man ſhall ſit on the Throne of his Glory, ye alſo ſhall ſit on twelve Thrones, judging the twelve Tribes of Iſrael:* When we find him aſſuring his Diſciples, that *in* (b) *his Father's Houſe were many Manſions*, ſome higher, ſome lower; in *his Kingdom* Places of different Dignity, ſome *on* (c) *his right Hand, and ſome on his left:* And, (d) in the Parable of the *Talents*, diſtributing Rewards, greater or leſs to *his Servants* according to their reſpective *Diligence:* When we find St. *Paul* exhorting his *Corinthians* to a liberal Extenſion of their Charity with this Argument, *he, that ſoweth ſparingly, ſhall reap ſparingly, and he that ſoweth bountifully, ſhall reap bountifully*; and St. *Peter* exhorting the converted *Jews*, by the Addition of one Virtue to another, (e) *to make their Calling and Election ſure, that ſo an Entrance might be miniſtred to them abundantly into the everlaſting Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jeſus:* From theſe and ſeveral other Intimations, that we meet with, we may reaſonably conclude, that in a future State, there will be a Diſparity of Rewards as well as Puniſhments. (f) In their heavenly *Communion* therefore the Saints above may not improperly be ſuppoſed to reſemble the *Polity*, which prevails among the Angels of God. The Angels are allowed to have their different Ranks, and Orders, and yet in this Hierarchy, Arch-Angels and Angels, Cherubims, and Seraphims, and Thrones, together with the lower Orders of theſe bleſſed Spirits, diſagree not among themſelves, though they differ from one another in Honour and Dignity, but, in their ſeveral Stations, readily and chearfully execute the Will and Pleaſure of their great Lord and Maſter, ſo, in the *Church of the Firſt-born*, there ſhall be no Uneaſineſs or Diſcontent: Thoſe, that are ſeated in the higher Manſions of Glory, ſhall not look down with Scorn and Contempt on thoſe, that are beneath them; nor ſhall thoſe, that are beneath them, lift up an envious Eye to ſuch, as are above them, but, by an inexpreſſible Union of ſublimated Charity, each ſhall make what the other enjoys his own, and all together, in different Notes, conſtitute one ſweet harmonious Conſort, in the Praiſes of God the Fountain of their Bliſs. The Difference of their Happineſs, in ſhort, ſhall proceed from the Inequality of their Capacities to receive them: Some ſhall be qualified to receive a greater, and ſome a leſs Proportion of it; but all, that do receive it, ſhall be full, and ſo verify what is ſaid of the *Manna, which came down from Heaven*, and was indeed an *Emblem* of the Felicities of it, (g) *he, that gathered much, had nothing over, and he, that gathered little, had no Lack.*

The OBJECTION.

" BUT, granting a future State, a " *local* Heaven, and a *local* Hell " (though *Divines* have been under great " Perplexity, where to place the *latter*) " yet we cannot but admire, how it comes " to paſs, that, notwithſtanding ſuch a " Multitude of *Revelations*, *it does not yet* " *appear* what the State of our future Felicity will be; and, conſidering of what " Concern and Conſequence it is to us, we " may

* By the *Regeneration* here we are to underſtand the *Reſurrection*, or ſecond Generation of Men to Life, after that Life, which they had in their firſt Generation, was extinguiſhed; and this *ſecond* Generation, or Production of Men to Life again, is more properly, than the other, the Work of God, as being effected ſolely by his divine Power, without the Concurrence of any ſecond Cauſes (for which Reaſon the *Righteous* are called *the Children of God, as being the Children of the Reſurrection*, Luke xx. 36.) whereas, in our firſt Generation into the World, our Parents were inſtrumental. *In*, or *at* this *Regeneration*, or Reſurrection, Chriſt promiſes his Apoſtles that *they ſhall ſit upon Thrones judging* (or governing, and preſiding over) *the twelve Tribes of Iſrael*; which (as *Grotius* obſerves upon the Place) is a *metaphorical* Expreſſion, taken from the ancient State of the Kingdom of *Iſrael*, in which the *Princes*, or Heads of the Tribes came neareſt in Dignity to the King's *Majeſty*, and in publick Aſſemblies, ſat next to the *royal* Throne, in *Chairs of State*, made of Ivory: From whence it appears, that our Saviour here promiſed his Apoſtles an eminent Degree of Glory and Dignity in his heavenly Kingdom, Bp. *Bull*'s Ser. Vol. I.

(z) Dan. xii. 2, 3. (a) Matt. xix. 28. (b) John xiv. 2. (c) Matt. xx. 23.
(d) Luke xix. 12, &c. (e) 2 Pet. i. 10, 11. (f) Bp. *Bull*'s Ser. Vol. I. (g) Exod. xvi. 18.

" may very well wonder, why a *Meſſenger* " ſhould never once be diſpatched from " the other World, to acquaint us with " the Sufferings of the *Damned*, if, in " Reality, there were any ſuch Thing. " Rewards and Puniſhments may be good " *Expedients* to encourage Virtue and de- " ter from Sin; but, as it is more *gene-* " *rous* in Man to be virtuous for *Virtue's* " *Sake*, than from the Proſpect of any " *Gain* or Profit, that may ariſe from it, " ſo would it be much more *commendable* " in God, to recede a little from the *Letter* " of his *Threatnings*, and not rigidly in- " flict the Penalties, that he has annex- " ed to his Laws. To live in the Pre- " ſence of God is ſaid to be the *ſupreme* " Beatitude of Heaven, and yet it is as " impoſſible (*h*) to *ſee him, who dwelleth in* " *Light, which no Man can approach and* " *live*, as it is for a Body to continue in " everlaſting Burnings, without being utterly " waſted and conſumed. In the Puniſh- " ment of the Damned perhaps there may " be ſome *Degrees*, and Remorſe of Con- " ſcience (for *elementary* Fire is too groſs " a Notion) may ariſe in Proportion to " Guilt and torment them; but, ſince " (*i*) the *Labourers* in the Goſpel *received* " every one alike, every one his *Peny*, " and no more; and, ſince the Reward of " Heaven is the Purchaſe of Chriſt's *Righ-* " *teouſneſs*, and meritorious Sufferings, " which are equally imputed to all true " Believers, where is the Room for any " *Inequality* among the Bleſſed? God in- " deed may *do with his own* what he " pleaſes: He may beſtow ſuch *Degrees* " of Honour and Happineſs upon his " *Saints*, as his infinite Bounty may think " fit; but certainly it becomes both his " *Goodneſs* and *Juſtice*, to heap no more " Calamity upon the Miſerable, than they " deſerve, and yet this he muſt neceſſarily " do, if he puniſhes *ſhort* and *temporary* " Crimes with permanent and eternal Tor- " ments, eſpecially, if we obſerve far- " ther, that theſe Puniſhments anſwer no " *End*, and ſerve no Purpoſes, except it " be to ſhew the Horror of his Vengeance, " and to damp the Joys of the Bleſſed " above, by the Conſideration of what " their rejected Brethren ſuffer below. As " therefore *eternal and everlaſting* are " Terms very frequently uſed in Scrip- " ture to denote Things of a *long Du-* " *ration* only, it may not be improper to " take them in this Senſe, when applied " to future Puniſhments, and ſo accede to " the mild and merciful Opinion of *Ori-* " *gen*, viz. that, after a certain Period " of Time, all Sins would be *expiated*, " and all Sinners releaſed, or, at leaſt, that " (according to others) God out of his " great Mercy and Compaſſion (whatever " he may do with Regard to the Righte- " ous) will utterly *annihilate* the Wicked " after Death, by (*k*) *deſtroying both Soul* " *and Body in Hell.*"

THAT there is a *local* Heaven and Hell, is evident from that noted Deſcription of the *judicial* Proceedings of the laſt Day, where our Saviour, having pronounced the Abſolution of the Juſt, and the Condemnation of the Wicked, immediately adds, (*l*) *ſo theſe ſhall go into everlaſting Puniſh-* *ment, and the Righteous into Life eternal.* The Place, which the Righteous are to inhabit, can be no other, than that, where the Son of God himſelf reſides; for (*m*) *I will, Father*, (ſays he in his Prayer) *that they, whom thou haſt given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my Glory, which thou haſt given me*; but where the Situation of the oppoſite Abode of the Wicked is to be, the Opinions of the Learned are divided, though there is no Occaſion, one would think, for any great Controverſy concerning it: For, (*n*) that, in the Centre of the Earth, there is a vaſt and inexhauſtible Treaſure of Fire amaſſed together, has been the Opinion of all the wiſe *Philoſophers*, both of *Greece* and *Rome*, and that the fiery Vaults therein are now the Priſons of apoſtate Angels, and reprobated Spirits, is a probable Conjecture from that Paſſage in the Apoſtle, where it is ſaid, that (*o*) *at the Name of Jeſus every Knee ſhould bow, of thoſe in Heaven, in Earth, and under the Earth*; where, if by *thoſe under the Earth* we may be permitted to underſtand wicked *Demons*, and impious *Souls*, we have found the Place of their preſent Confinement, namely, that infernal Region of Fire, which is in the Bowels of the Earth. At preſent indeed the Devils are permitted (*p*) *to go to and fro upon the Earth, and to walk up and down in it.* From the *Legion*, which our Lord diſpoſ- ſeſſed,

Anſwered by ſhewing that there is a local *Hell, and* where.

(*h*) 1 Tim. vi. 16. (*i*) Matt. x. 1, &c. (*k*) Matt. x. 28. (*l*) Matt. xxv. 46.
(*m*) John xvii. 24. (*n*) Vid. *Burnet's* Theor. (*o*) Phil. ii. 10. (*p*) Job i. 7.

ſeſſed, (*q*) *beſeeching him, that he would not command them to go out into the Deep*, we may learn likewiſe, that this *Abyſs* (as the Original is) was the common Place of their Confinement, from whence they had then eſcaped, and to which they dreaded to return: But then, the true Reaſon, why they have this Liberty, and Relaxation given them, is becauſe their Doom is not yet abſolutely fixed, till after the Day of Judgment; but, as ſoon as that is paſſed, all this lower World ſhall immediately be ſet on Fire, and then ſhall they, and all wicked Sinners, that reſemble them, be therein confined for ever; for ſo we are taught by St. *Peter*, viz. that (*r*) *the Heavens, and the Earth, which are now, are reſerved unto Fire, againſt the Day of Judgment, and the Perdition of the Ungodly.*

That though its Fire is to be material,

THIS is to be the Place of their Confinement: And here (according to the general Opinion of *Divines*) they are to be tormented with *real* and *material* Fire. For, whoever conſiders the Stile of Scripture, (*s*) and how frequently the Pains of Hell are therein expreſſed by the Word *Fire*, muſt needs be induced to think, that this dreadful and devouring *Element* muſt, at leaſt, be one *Ingredient* of them. Had the Expreſſion indeed been but once or twice made uſe of, and by one or two of the *ſacred* Penmen only, we might then have ſome Pretence to imagine it an *improper* Way of ſpeaking, and call it *metaphorical*; but when we find it ſo *often* repeated, and by ſo *many* different Writers, even when they deſignedly are giving us an Account of the Torments of Hell, what Reaſon can poſſibly be given, that the *Fire*, which they conſtantly mention upon this Occaſion, ſhould be nothing more, than a mere *Figure* or *Similitude?*

Yet it will not conſume *the Wicked.*

AN everlaſting Burning will ſoon deſtroy the Bodies of the Wicked, and ſo defeat their everlaſting Puniſhment. But why may not the *Reſurrection-Bodies* be of ſuch a *Temper*, as to be able to endure a perpetual Scorching without being conſumed? Or why may not the Fire be of ſuch a Nature, as to repair their Bodies as faſt as it conſumes them. *Philoſophers, as well as we*, (ſays (*t*) *Tertullian*) *know what Difference there is between ſecret Fire, and that which is expoſed to our Eyes; and that the Fire, ordained for the Uſe of Man, is of another Kind; than that, which ſerves for the Judgment of God (whether it be that, which forms the Lightning, which Heaven darts, or that, which belcheth out of the Earth through the Tops of Mountains) for it does not conſume that, which it burns, but whilſt it deſtroys, repairs:* And therefore, not to trouble ourſelves in ſearching into the Hiſtories of Nature, in order to find out ſuch Creatures, as are capable of bearing the extream Heat of Fire, without being conſumed, our ſtrongeſt Argument lies in the Conſideration of God's *Omnipotence*; (*u*) for though we cannot conclude the Exiſtence of any Thing from God's Power to effect it, if his Power be conſidered as diſtinct from the *Revelation* of his Will; yet, when he has plainly and poſitively revealed any Thing, which we cannot clearly comprehend, we may, and ought ſtedfaſtly to believe it, upon this *Principle*, that, *though it may be impoſſible with Man, yet is it poſſible with God:* And therefore, as we believe, that, by the Interpoſition of divine Power, the *three Children* ſurvived the Flames of the *fiery Furnace*, (*x*) without being in the leaſt injured, or affected with them; ſo have we the like Reaſon to believe, that the Wicked, by the like Means, ſhall be enabled to endure the moſt exquiſite Torments of unquenchable Fire in the World to come, without Extinction of their Beings.

God's Juſtice *abſolved on the* eternal *Puniſhment of the Wicked.*

To continue them in Being, under ſuch Circumſtances, we own, is a *rigid* Infliction of the Penalty of the Law, but then it ſhould be conſidered, that as the divine Wiſdom thought proper to enact the Penalty, it can be inconſiſtent with no other Attribute to inflict it. (*y*) *Human* Juſtice indeed many Times does, and ought to remit ſomething of thoſe *Puniſhments*, which it has affixed to its Laws, becauſe no human Wiſdom can foreſee all thoſe Circumſtances, which may *extenuate* the Guilt of any Action: But the *divine* Juſtice, which is ſubject to no ſuch Imperfection, cannot be thus obliged to alter its Determinations, or reverſe the Sentence, that it has pronounced; and he, who can underſtand ſo important a Part of the Laws, *as the Sanction*, with ſuch a Liberty of Interpretation,

(*q*) Luke viii. 31. (*r*) 2 Pet. iii. 7. (*s*) *Edwards's* Body Vol. I. (*t*) Apol. C. 48.
(*u*) *Lupton's* Ser. (*x*) Dan. iii. 27. (*y*) *Rogers's* Ser.

tion, as if God designed, by the Severity of the Expreſſion, only to ſtrike a Terror into his Creatures, and never intended ſtrictly to execute the Penalties, he hath threatened, may eaſily interpret away the Force of the whole Law, and diſpence with the Obligation of every Precept of it. *God's Ways indeed are not as our Ways, neither are his Thoughts as our Thoughts:* But of this we may be aſſured, that, in every Action of his, there is an exact *Harmony* and Concurrence of all his Attributes, and, though his Laws are more immediate Expreſſions of his Wiſdom, Juſtice, and Authority, yet his Juſtice and Mercy were equally conſulted in enacting them. Every Argument for Mercy and Compaſſion was then weighed and conſidered by him; and ſince they did not prevent his *making* the Law then, they can never be of Force to prevent its *Execution*. The Truth is, were it not conſiſtent with God's *Juſtice* to inflict *eternal* Puniſhment upon Sinners, his infinite *Wiſdom* would have prevented his threatening it; but ſince we find he has actually done ſo, and that his Comminations are *abſolute*, we have nothing elſe to do, but to be determined by his own Words, (*z*) *I the Lord have ſpoken it: It ſhall come to paſs, and I will do it: I will not go back, neither will I ſpare, neither will I repent.*

The Words eternal *and* everlaſting, *when applied to future Puniſhment, to be taken* ſtrictly.

But are not the Words eternal *and* everlaſting *ſometimes put for a finite, though perhaps a long Continuance of Time?* They are ſo indeed very frequently, and in ſeveral Places of Scripture; but then, they muſt be explained (as all other *Terms* ought to be) according to the Nature of the Things, they are intended to ſignify, and the Circumſtances of the Place, where they ſtand. When they can only denote a *temporary* Continuance of any Thing, there is a *Neceſſity* of *limiting* their Senſe to ſome determinate Space of Time. Thus (*a*) *the Hills*, (*b*) *the Mountains*, (*c*) the Poſſeſſion of *Canaan*, (*d*) the *Prieſthood* of the *Jews*, and ſeveral of its *Ordinances*, are called *everlaſting*, but then it is in a *figurative* Manner of ſpeaking, and where they can mean no more, than a certain long Period. But now, the Word (if we look into its proper and ſtrict Senſe) admits of no ſuch Limitation. It denotes an endleſs Duration, without Intermiſſion, or Term of expiring: And that it is always uſed in this *proper* and ſtrict Senſe, when applied to *future* Puniſhment, is certain from thoſe other Expreſſions, whereby the ſame future Puniſhment is repreſented, and deſcribed: "For, (*e*) if the Fire, in which the Re- "probates are to be tormented, be ever- "laſting; if ſo abſolutely everlaſting, that "it ſhall (*f*) *never be quenched*; if ſo cer- "tainly never to be quenched, that (*g*) *the* "*Smoke thereof ſhall aſcend for ever and* "*ever*; if thoſe, that are caſt into it, "(*h*) *ſhall be tormented for ever and ever*, "(all which the Scriptures expreſsly teach) "then muſt this Puniſhment be ſtrictly "*eternal*, and the Wicked, who are to "undergo it, be *co-eternal with it*."

And the Opinion of Origen *ſtated and confuted.*

But have not many learned Men among Chriſtians, been of a quite contrary Perſuaſion? Origen indeed is the firſt, who is charged with this Opinion——*That there was in Hell-fire a certain purging Quality, which, in Proceſs of Time, would expiate the Guilt of Men's Crimes, and, from Miſery, tranſlate them into the State of the Bleſſed*; but for this Conceit there is no Foundation either in Scripture, or Reaſon. (*i*) It is indeed a *Relick* of his old *Platonick* Notions: For, as the Profeſſors of that *Philoſophy* were of Opinion, that human Souls, after their Departure hence, paſs out of one Body into another, till thoſe, that are *polluted* and vitiated, are *purged* and cured of their Depravity; this gave Occaſion to ſuch *Chriſtians*, as were originally *Platonicks*, to deny the Eternity of Hell-torments. For, if Souls were ſhifted from one Body to another, they thence ſuppoſed that there might be an *Intermiſſion* or Ceſſation of the Pains of Hell, a *Relaxation* by Degrees, and, at length, a total Exemption from them. But this Suppoſition is ſo wild and extravagant, that we find (*k*) *Theophylact* cenſuring the great *Origen*, as a mere Trifler in this Point, and, in Oppoſition to him, in this wiſe ſettling it —— "That it is impoſſible "for thoſe, who, in the general Judgment, "ſhall be condemned to a State of Puniſh- "ment for their Sins, ever to be numbered "among the Righteous, or partake with "them in the Joys of Heaven: For, as "the

(*z*) Ezek. xxiv. 14. (*a*) Gen. xlix. 26. (*b*) Hab. iii. 6. (*c*) Gen. xvii. 8. (*d*) Num. xxv. 13.
(*e*) *Pearſon* on the Creed. (*f*) Mark ix. 44. (*g*) Rev. xiv. 11. (*h*) Rev. xx. 10.
(*i*) *Edwards*'s Body Vol. II. (*k*) Com. in Matt. 25.

" the only Means of obtaining the Hap-
" pineſs of Heaven is by Repentance and
" Converſion, there is no Poſſibility for
" thoſe to repent and be converted, who
" are finally deprived from the Means of
" Grace, and already conſigned to a Place
" of Torment."

God's Ends *in inflicting it.*

But what End or Purpoſe does this puniſhing the Wicked ſo unmercifully anſwer? (l) Nay but, O Man, who art thou, that replieſt againſt God? Shall the Thing formed ſay to him that formed it, why haſt thou made me thus? Hath not the Potter Power over the Clay of the ſame Lump, to make one Veſſel unto Honour, and another unto Diſhonour? What, if God, willing to ſhew his Wrath, and to make his Power known, endured with much Long-ſuffering the Veſſels of Wrath fitted for Deſtruction, and then ſuffered them to fall into it? The End of God's ſuffering them ſometimes to live at Eaſe, and ſometimes to be viſited with Afflictions, is to make them *better*, becauſe this World is a State of Trial, wherein they may fit and prepare themſelves for Eternity, even as they pleaſe; but, in the other World, the Poſition of Things is changed, the Time of *Probation* is over; and therefore the Deſign of God's Severity then muſt be to diſplay the infinite *Integrity* of his Juſtice, and to ſhew, how contrary it is to the Rectitude of his Nature, to let Sin go unpuniſhed; to let the World, in *general*, know, the deplorable Conſequences of a wilful Rebellion againſt their Creator, and, by ſuch Inſtances of the divine Severity, to confirm the *Bleſſed*, in *particular*, in their Happineſs. God indeed has promiſed, that they ſhall never fall from their bliſsful State, or forfeit their Inheritance in Light; *(m)* but that the Reflection on the Puniſhment of the Wicked may be one conſiderable *Means*, among others, to keep them invariably firm in an uninterrupted Practice of Godlineſs, and, conſequently, in an uninterrupted Enjoyment of Happineſs, the Apoſtle ſeems to intimate, when, for the very ſame Purpoſe, he reminds us of the Fate of the apoſtate Angels, *(n) whom God ſpared not, but caſt down to Hell, and delivered into Chains of Darkneſs, to be reſerved unto Judgment*, viz. that we might ſecure our own Standing, and not follow their *pernicious Ways, whoſe Judgment lingreth not, and whoſe Damnation ſlumbreth not.*

Annihilation *a vain Expectation.*

But will not this Damnation deſtroy both Soul and Body in Hell, and ſo for ever extinguiſh the Man's Being? Our Saviour's Words indeed, as they are delivered by *(o)* St. *Matthew*, have been wreſted to this Senſe by ſuch Sinners, as place their only Hope in *Annihilation* after Death; *(p)* a ſad gloomy Hope, and an horrid Conſolation; and yet from this dreadful, this deſperate Hope, I may call it, is every impenitent Sinner cut off: For, that the Deſtruction, which he hopes for in Hell, can mean no more, than a State of everlaſting Suffering there, is manifeſt from the different Manner of our Saviour's expreſſing himſelf in another *Goſpel*; *(q) I will forewarn you whom ye ſhall fear, fear him, whom, after he hath killed, hath Power to caſt into Hell, yea, I ſay unto you, fear him:* But now, *(r)* upon the Suppoſition of a total Extinction of Being, what Reaſon has the Sinner to *fear* God, to dread his being caſt into *Hell*, or to tremble at the Thoughts of ſuffering more Pains than ordinary there; ſince, with Reſpect to Miſery or Happineſs, it is the very ſame Thing to be *annihilated*, as never to have had any Being at all? If therefore there be any Truth in our Lord's Declaration, or any Equity in God's proportioning Men's Puniſhments to their Crimes, how can it be expected, that he, who never annihilates the leaſt Particle of Matter, the moſt inſignificant *Atom*, ſhould, on a ſudden, utterly aboliſh both the Souls and Bodies of the whole Race of the *Reprobate*, purely in Kindneſs and Commiſeration to them, and that they may eſcape the Puniſhment which he had ſo often threatened, and they ſo juſtly deſerved, for their abominable Iniquities?

The future Abodes of the Damned and the Righteous are at a vaſt Diſtance.

In that lively and inſtructive *Parable*, wherein our Saviour meant to exhibit the different Conditions of Men in the next World, the Matter is quite otherwiſe repreſented. There the rich *Epicure* is in *being*, in Torments, in exquiſite Torments, and deſirous of ſome ſmall Alleviation of them, but all in vain. He is ſaid indeed *(s) to lift up his Eyes, to ſee Lazarus in Abraham's Boſom*, and to hold a Conference with the *Patriarch*; but, (beſides that many

(*l*) Rom. ix. 20, &c. (*m*) *Seed*'s Serm. Vol. II. (*n*) 2 Pet. ii. 4, &c. (*o*) Ch. x. 28.
(*p*) *Seed*'s Ser. Vol. II. (*q*) Luke xii. 5. (*r*) *Moſs*'s Ser. Vol. I. (*s*) Luke xvi. 23, 24.

many Paſſages in Parables are purely *ornamental*, and deſigned only to embelliſh the Narration) we can hardly ſuppoſe, that the Abodes of the Wicked and Godly (eſpecially after the laſt *Adjuſtment* of Things) are ſo nearly ſituated, as to give the leaſt *Glimps* of Comfort to the *one*, or *Shadow* of Diſquiet to the *other*, and therefore it is expreſly ſaid of this miſerable Creature, that *he ſaw Abraham afar off*. If indeed this *terreſtrial* Globe, when ſet on Fire (as there is abundant Reaſon to believe) is to be the Place of Torment for the Wicked, the higheſt Heavens, which are to be the Manſions of the Righteous, are at ſuch an immenſe Diſtance from it, that they can never be annoyed by the Wailings and Lamentations of ſuch, as are confined to thoſe diſmal and uncomfortable Quarters, from whence there will be no *Outlet*, or Poſſibility of making an Inroad upon the reſt of the Creation. The Employment of the Saints above likewiſe is ſo tranſporting, and full of Pleaſure and Extacy, as to leave no Room for any other Conſideration to enter, and the Conformity of their Affections to the divine Will ſo perfect and abſolute, that, if any Remembrance of an abſent Friend or Relation ſhould, at any Time, ariſe in their Minds, it would be attended with Abhorrence, rather than *Compaſſion*, and ſo go off with a (*t*) *great and marvellous are thy Works, O Lord God Almighty, juſt and true are thy Ways, thou King of Saints!*

Why Meſſengers *are not diſpatched from the other World.*

FROM the ſame Parable we may obſerve a very good Reaſon, why *Meſſengers* are not ſent from the other World to acquaint us with what paſſes there, namely, becauſe ſuch an Expedient would be *needleſs*, where there is ſufficient Means of Inſtruction already, and utterly *uſeleſs* towards the Conviction and Reformation of thoſe, that are unreaſonably blind and obſtinate: (*u*) *Nay, Father Abraham, but if one went unto them from the Dead, they will repent*; ſo ſaid the rich Man in Torments concerning his ſurviving Brethren; but *Abraham* knew better, and therefore replied, *if they hear not Moſes, and the Prophets, neither will they be perſuaded, though one roſe from the Dead:* And the Reaſon hereof is plain, becauſe the Motives to Repentance and Amendment of Life, contained in the Scriptures, are ſo cogently perſuaſive, that where theſe prevail not, nothing elſe will. To thoſe, who are reſolved not to be convinced, all Arguments are equal. The ſame Cauſe, that prompts them to Infidelity now, will have its Influence upon them then; the ſame Blindneſs of Heart, and Vileneſs of Manners, Averſion to Goodneſs, and Adheſion to Sin, that keep them at a Diſtance from Conviction now, will, at all Times, render them Proof againſt all Manner of Perſuaſion. (*x*) For, upon Suppoſition that one *came to them from the Dead*, on Purpoſe *to perſuade them*, would it not be *natural* for ſuch Perſons, as have been accuſtomed to ridicule the Doctrine of *Spirits*, to look upon ſuch an Apparition as a mere Dream, the *Imagery* of a *melancholick* Fancy, ſuch as now and then preſents itſelf to muſing thoughtful People, when their Spirits are low, and the *Spleen* has got Poſſeſſion of them? Whatever it might be, they certainly would be far from thinking it the Perſon, whoſe Shape and Voice it aſſumed; "becauſe, if there "be ſuch a Place as Hell, their Concluſion would be, that he, who had been "their Companion in Iniquity, was certainly tormented in the Flames of it, and, "while he was ſo, could neither have Eaſe "enough to contrive, nor Liberty enough "to put in Practice ſuch Expedients for "the Relief of his ſurviving Friends." And thus would they reaſon themſelves out of the Impreſſions, which the Apparition might make on them at firſt, and, in Proceſs of Time, come to account it a vain Fancy, an idle Dream, and ſo think no more of the *Meſſenger*, that was ſent Expreſs from the other World to inform, and reclaim them.

Why we have no adequate Notions of our future Felicity.

FROM the ſame Parable, where *Lazarus* is ſeated in *Abraham*'s Boſom, it likewiſe is manifeſt, that the Saints, in the next Life, ſhall be amply rewarded for all their Sufferings in this, though, as yet, *it does not appear what they ſhall be*, nor can we comprehend the preciſe Nature of that Happineſs, which will then be conferred on them. The Scriptures indeed are very copious in their Declarations upon this Subject; but then, we may obſerve, that theſe Declarations are expreſſed in Terms full of Condeſcenſion, and accommodated to the Capacities of Men, dwelling in Bodies of Fleſh,

(*t*) Rev. xv. 3. (*u*) Luke xvi. 30, 31. (*x*) Bp. *Atterbury*'s Ser. Vol. II.

Fleſh, and converſing with groſs and material Objects; that this is the true Reaſon, why we find the Beatitudes of Heaven figured out to us in ſuch a Multitude of *Metaphors* and Parables; and that it is no real Argument againſt their Worth or Certainty, that they are repreſented to us in ſuch a Guiſe, that we can have no adequate Conception of them. (*y*) We eſteem it no Reflection at all, either upon the *Truth*, or upon the *Excellency* of thoſe Arts and Sciences, which are in the higheſt Eſteem among Men, that Children, or People of low Capacities are not in a Condition of making themſelves Maſters of them, but that Ripeneſs of Years and Judgment, much Thought, long Exerciſe, and painful Study are neceſſary Preparations for them. Thus neither is it any *Diminution*, but a juſt and high Commendation of the Bliſs and Glory reſerved for the next World, that they are not fully and clearly to be known in a State, where the wiſeſt of Mankind muſt, in Regard to theſe Matters, be content to *think*, and *ſpeak*, and *underſtand*, as *Children*; where they, that know moſt, *know but in Part*, and they, that imagine they ſee cleareſt, ſee only *through a Glaſs darkly*. Were theſe Things indeed leſs *excellent*, we ſhould be better able to diſcern them, but then, in Proportion as they come more within our Comprehenſion, they would, in their own Nature, be leſs worthy of our *Love*.

That it is lawful to ſerve God with a Proſpect of Reward.

God however has revealed ſo much of them, as is ſufficient to engage our Faith and Hope, and to excite our utmoſt Diligence to attain them; nor was it ever thought a mean and inglorious Thing, to ſerve God (*z*) *with Reſpect to this Recompence of Reward*, (*a*) till ſome faithful *Divines*, pretending to a more *ſpiritual* and refined *Theology*, than any Doctors of the Church, that ever went before them, delivered it as a certain Truth—*that the Obedience, which is excited by the Hope of Reward, is not true*, i. e. filial, but a *ſervile, mercenary Obedience, and ſo not to be allowed in Chriſtians under the Goſpel-Diſpenſation.* But now, if, in the Goſpel-Diſpenſation, a future Reward is every where propounded, as a Motive to excite and ſtir us up to the Works of Righteouſneſs, and we, in the Way of our Obedience, are expreſly commanded to make it our chief Deſign and Buſineſs to attain it; if our bleſſed Saviour encourages his Diſciples to a chearful Suffering for Righteouſneſs Sake by this Argument, that (*b*) *their Reward ſhall be great in Heaven*, and commands us all to *ſeek firſt*, or principally, (*c*) *the Kingdom of God, and his Righteouſneſs*, i. e. the heavenly *Glory*, which he hath promiſed, and the *Holineſs*, which he requires, as the Condition and Qualification for it: Nay, if our Lord himſelf, in his perfect and meritorious Obedience, had an Eye to his future Exaltation; if, (*d*) *for the Crown, that was ſet before him, he endured the Croſs, deſpiſing the Shame, and is now ſet down at the right Hand of God*, then may the moſt perfect of his Servants think it no Diſparagement to their Virtue, if the *ſame Mind be in them*, which was in *the Author and Finiſher of our Faith*, or if (as the Apoſtle has inſtructed them by his own Example) (*e*) *forgetting thoſe Things, that are behind, and reaching forth unto thoſe Things, that are before, they* * *preſs forward to the Mark of the high Calling of God in Chriſt Jeſus.* (*f*) Away then with this *romantick* Notion of the *Bravery* of Virtue, which the *Philoſophers* of old, for Want of Revelation, were forced to content themſelves with, but never ought to enter into Chriſtian *Theology*: we, (*g*) *who have the Light of the Knowledge of the Glory of God in the Face of Jeſus Chriſt*, and, (*h*) *according to his abundant Mercy, are begotten again unto a lively Hope*; we, who have (*i*) *Glory, and Honour, and Immortality* ſet before us, and are (*k*) *compaſſed about with a Cloud of Witneſſes, who, through Faith*, or in Hopes of the ſame Reward, gave ſuch

* The Expreſſion is *metapherical*, and borrowed from the ancient Cuſtom in *Races*, wherein he, that held, or beſtowed the Prize, ſat in ſome high Place, and from thence, by an Herald or Crier, called to each of the Racers, acquainted him with the Value of the Prize, and promiſed it to him, that ſhould beſt acquit himſelf in the Race: And, in Alluſion to all this, the Apoſtle repreſents God, from the higheſt Heavens, as calling to us by Chriſt, and offering us the ineſtimable *Prize* of eternal Glory if we *ſtrive* earneſtly and run well that Race of Virtue and Obedience, which, in the Goſpel of Chriſt, is marked out, and preſcribed unto us. Bp. *Bull*'s Ser. Vol. II.

(*y*) *Stanhope*'s Ep. and Goſp. Vol. II. (*z*) Heb. xi, 26. (*a*) Bp. *Bull*'s Ser. Vol. I. (*b*) Matt. v. 12. (*c*) Matt. vi. 33. (*d*) Heb. xii. 2. (*e*) Phil iii. 13, 14. (*f*) *Nichols*'s Conf. Vol. II. (*g*) 2 Cor. iv. 6. (*h*) 1 Pet. i. 3. (*i*) Rom. ii. 7. (*k*) Heb xii. 1.

glorious Proofs of their Obedience, both *active* and *paſſive*, as the Author to the *Hebrews* has recorded, have a more ſolid and ſubſtantial *Conſolation*, in all our Trials, and Afflictions, whereunto we *may flee for Refuge*, an *Anchor of the Soul, both ſure and ſtedfaſt*, whereon the *Patriarchs*, and *Prophets*, the *Apoſtles*, *Martyrs*, and *Confeſſors* all depended, and, having in the Strength of it, *rid* out the Storms of Life, have now (*l*) *obtained the End of their Faith, even the Salvation of their Souls.*

That Chriſt's Righteouſneſs does not make all Saints equal *in Heaven.*

THE Salvation of our Souls indeed, and our Attainment of everlaſting Happineſs is the *Purchaſe* of Chriſt's Righteouſneſs, but how? Not in ſuch a Manner, as to make Chriſt's Righteouſneſs, which is the moſt perfect Righteouſneſs, become the Righteouſneſs of every Believer, for then muſt every Believer have an *equal* Right to the higheſt Reward in Heaven, which is certainly not true. (*m*) The Blood of Chriſt indeed is alike ſufficient, and was alike ſhed for all Men; but we can no more infer from thence, that the Rewards purchaſed by that Blood will be *alike* beſtowed on all, than we can, that the ſame *Degrees* of Holineſs and Sanctification will, through the Efficacy of that Blood, be alike communicated to all. It is poſſible indeed that all may be made equally *holy* in the Life to come, but it does not therefore follow, that they will be all equally *happy*, becauſe Men's Happineſs hereafter will be proportioned, not to their *future*, but their *preſent* Holineſs, not to thoſe good Qualities, with which they ſhall be endued, when they are in Heaven, but to thoſe, which they became Maſters of, before they departed this Life, and were admitted thither; upon all which Accounts, the Propoſition will ſtand true—that, though all the Righteous ſhall *ſhine forth*, with an unſpeakable Luſtre, in *the Kingdom of their Father*, yet, notwithſtanding this, one Saint ſhall ſtill *differ* from another Saint in *Glory*.

An Objection from the Lord of the Vineyard's *Behaviour,*

THERE is one Objection againſt the Doctrine, we are here eſtabliſhing, taken from the Behaviour of the *Lord of the Vineyard*, who pays all his Labourers alike, and makes thoſe, who had wrought there but (*n*) *one Hour*, equal *unto them, who had born the Heat, and Burden of the Day:* But, if we look into the Parable, we ſhall find, that the whole Scope and Deſign of it is, to juſtify God's Proceedings in the Diſpenſation of his Grace towards the Church of the *Jews*, and that of the *Gentiles*, and to ſhew ſome Reaſons, why the latter, though much *junior* to the former, was yet made its equal in the Benefits and Bleſſings of his Covenant in Chriſt Jeſus: But what is this to the Purpoſe? (*o*) *The Kingdom of Heaven* mentioned in the Parable is the Kingdom of *Grace*, not that of *Glory:* All Men, without any Regard to their own Works, have here a Tender of ſufficient *Grace* made them, but the *Glory*, which ſhall be revealed hereafter, will be proportioned to the Uſe they have made of that Grace, which God hath been pleaſed to vouchſafe them; even as we find in another *Parable* of a near Similitude with this, that (*p*) *the Servant*, who, *with his Lord's Money, had gained ten Pounds*, had the Government of *ten Cities*, and he, that had *gained five*, the Government of *five Cities* committed to him in Reward of his Fidelity. Both the *Servants*, we may obſerve, were *faithful*, and both diligent, but becauſe the Diligence of the *one* far ſurpaſſed that of the other, his Reward is made proportionably greater.

And of our ſeeing God *anſwered.*

THE only remaining Queſtion is, how we ſhall be able to ſuſtain the Weight of all this Happineſs, and to *ſee God, and live?* Now, (*q*) though it be true, that the Eſſence of God is immaterial, and conſequently inviſible, yet there is a *Glory* (which is, as it were, the Train and Attendance of his Eſſence) the Notification, or Diſcovery of his Preſence in a determinate Place, by ſome Kind of magnificent luminous Appearance, which we know has been accommodated, even to the Perception of *moral* Eyes. Thus (*r*) *the Glory of God* is ſaid to have appeared on Mount *Sinai ſix Days together*, and, afterwards, (*s*) *in the Sanctuary to have reſted and dwelt*, becauſe of its long Continuance there: (*t*) at the *Dedication* of the Temple *it filled the Houſe*; and, at the Birth of our Saviour, it (*u*) *ſhone round the Shepherds*; nor is their Conjecture amiſs, who imagine, that to this Manner of Viſion it is, that the Apoſtle alludes, when he tells us, that (*x*) *now we ſee through a Glaſs darkly, but then Face to Face*, meaning, that,

(*l*) 1 Pet. i. 9. (*m*) Bp. *Smalridge*'s Ser. (*n*) Matt. xx. 12. (*o*) *Smalridge*'s Ser. (*p*) Luke xix. 12, &c. (*q*) *Young*'s Ser. (*r*) Exod. xxiv. 16. (*s*) 1 Sam. iv. 4. (*t*) 1 Kings viii. 11. (*u*) Luke ii. 9. (*x*) 1 Cor. xiii. 12.

that, in this preſent Life, (according to the Courſe of ordinary Diſpenſations) we can only ſee the Glory of God in its *Shadow* and Reflection from the *Glaſs* of his Creatures, becauſe the Weakneſs of human Nature can bear no more; (y) but then, when *this mortal ſhall have put on Immortality*, when the Bodies of Saints ſhall be refined and ſpiritualized, and their Eyes fortified to ſuſtain ſo refulgent and glorious an Object, *then Face to Face*; then ſhall we be able to ſee the whole Luſtre of the Divine Majeſty, as familiarly, as one Man beholds the Face of another, and, in every Glance, we make that Way, receive Joys ineffable. For, if the grateful Objects of Senſe do make up a great Part of human Delectation, there is no Queſtion to be made, but that this Glory of God, being thus accommodated to our Senſes, will raiſe in us a more raviſhing and tranſcendent Delight, than all the Objects in Nature are capable of producing.

The DISSERTATION.

Of the Immortality of the Soul.

What the Soul is,

THAT there is ſomething in our Compoſition, (z) that thinks, and apprehends, and reflects, and deliberates; that determines and doubts, conſents and denies; that wills, and demurs, and reſolves, and chooſes, and rejects; that receives various Senſations and Impreſſions from external Objects, and produces voluntary Motions in ſeveral Parts of the Body; of this every Man is conſcious, and convinced by his own Experience. That theſe *Faculties* and Operations of thinking, willing, and perceiving, muſt proceed from ſomething or other, as their *efficient* Cauſe (ſince nothing can never be able to produce any Thing at all) is likewiſe *ſelf-evident*; and therefore if there be nothing found in the *Matter*, we carry about with us, capable of producing theſe *Effects*, they muſt neceſſarily proceed from that *incorporeal* Inhabitant, which we call *Soul:* that this Soul is a *real* Inhabitant, and *permanent Subſtance* in us, muſt be acknowledged by every one, who conſiders how impoſſible it is for an *Accident* to be the Subject of thoſe ſeveral Powers of Cogitation, Volition, and Perception, wherewith we find the Mind of Man endowed; and that it is an *immaterial* Subſtance is likewiſe manifeſt from its having Affections and Paſſions, and Powers and Faculties, (as we ſhall ſee hereafter) utterly incompatible with all the known *Properties* of Matter, however moved or modified.

Why hard to be conceived,

IT is true indeed, and we readily acknowledge, that we have no *poſitive*, no compleat Idea of immaterial Subſtance: But then, it muſt be allowed, at the ſame Time, that we have the like Obſcurity in our Conception of *Matter*, when we ſtrip it of all its Qualities and Accidents. (a) All Philoſophers are agreed, that the Subſtance of material Things is every where the *ſame*, how differently ſoever it may be modified: But now, who ſhall be able to tell us, what this pure naked Matter is, which becomes the Subject of ſuch different and contrary Qualities, which is hot and cold, hard and ſoft, light and heavy, viſible and inviſible, and yet in itſelf is *none* of all *this*, though capable of being made *any?* The naked *Eſſences* of Things muſt be allowed to be unſearchable; nor can we form any Conception of *material* Beings, but what ariſes from their natural Powers, or ſenſible Qualities, and yet no one, for this Reaſon, ever yet doubted of their *Exiſtence:* In like Manner, though we have no clear and diſtinct Notion of the pure and naked Subſtance of a *Spirit*, yet, from its Virtues, Operations, and Affections, which are *eſſentially* different from thoſe of *Matter*, we may perceive, both the Reality of its *Exiſtence*, and the Difference of its *Subſtance*.

How it differs from Matter.

ALL that we can poſſibly conceive of Matter is——that it is ſomething *extended*, or taking up Room; that it is *ſolid* and impenetrable, and capable of receiving a great Variety of *Forms* and Figures; but now what Relation or Connection is there between all *this* and thinking, or willing? Does the Idea of Extenſion, Solidity,

(y) *Young*'s Ser. (z) *Bentley*'s Ser. at *Boyle*'s Lect. (a) *Sherlock* on the Immor.

lidity, Figure, or any other corporeal Quality, include in it *Cogitation*? Or (*b*) rather does it not ſhock common Senſe to talk of a *Yard* of Underſtanding, or a *Pound* of Reaſoning, &c? How then ſhall Matter be able to produce *Thought*, when all its Properties are ſo directly repugnant to it? The Short of the Queſtion is, as there are no Virtues or Qualities belonging to *Body*, but what include *Extenſion*, which is the moſt immediate and eſſential Property of Matter, ſo there is nothing, that we know of, belonging to the *Soul*, but what includes *Cogitation*, or thinking in it; but now *Extenſion* and *Thinking* do not include each other, and therefore we have Reaſon to infer, that theſe two Properties belong to different Kinds of Beings, and can never *meet in the ſame Subject*.

Though never ſo modified.

NAY ſuppoſing Matter never ſo variouſly *modified*, yet how ſhould this contribute any Thing towards the Formation of a *cogitative* Being? All that we can ſuppoſe in this Caſe is——(*c*) That the *Bulk* of Matter ſhould be augmented, or its *Parts* attenuated; they put into a different Site or *Figure*, or mov'd with a greater or leſs Degree of *Velocity*. But now if the *Bulk* or Increaſe of Matter could be productive of Thought, then would an *Elephant* ſurpaſs the Capacity of the moſt contemplative Man; if Matter *attenuated* could work this Effect, the Mind in the Bodies of *Flies* (becauſe their *Organs* are of a leſs and finer Contexture) would be more excellent, than ours; if its Site or Figure could beget *Cogitation*, the Importance would be great, whether the ſame *Log of Wood* lay *eaſtward* or *weſtward* from the *Centre* of any other Body, and whether it were hew'd into a *ſpherical*, *conical*, *or pyramidical* Shape; or, if the *Degree* of its *Motion* could make ſuch an Improvement in it, then would a Ship under Sail ((*d*) as one expreſſes it) be a very *intelligent* Creature, though, while it lies at Anchor, its Faculties be aſleep, and, though cold Water or Ice may be phlegmatick and ſenſeleſs, yet when it boils in a Kettle, it cannot fail of having wonderful *Heats* of thinking, and *Ebullitions* of Fancy. Horrid Abſurdities, and ridiculous Nonſenſe! which thoſe (*e*) *vain Bablers*, as the holy Scripture, and *minute Philoſophers*, as *Tully* calls them, muſt expect to be told of, "who are either ſo diſingenuous, or ſo "ſtupid, to profeſs to believe (as the ſame "Author goes on) that all the *natural* "Powers and *acquired* Habits of the "Mind, that penetrating Underſtanding "and accurate Judgment, that Strength "of Memory and Readineſs of Wit, "that Liberality, and Juſtice, and Pru"dence, and Magnanimity, that Charity "and Beneficence to Mankind, that inge"nuous Fear and awful Love of God, "that comprehenſive Knowledge of Hiſ"tories and Languages, that deep Inſight "into the Works and Wonders of Nature, "that rich Vein of *Poetry*, and inex"hauſtible Fund of *Eloquence*, thoſe ex"alted Diſcoveries in *mathematical Theo*"*rems* and divine Contemplations, all the "admirable Endowments and Capacities "of human Nature, which we ſometimes "ſee actually exiſtent in one and the ſame "Perſon, can be the Reſult of the Agili"ty of the animal Spirits, a briſk Fermen"tation of the Blood, or a blind Shuffling "and Claſhing of Atoms."

In what Manner God formed *it*.

WHAT God can do we muſt not pretend to diſpute; but this we may adventure to ſay, that the Ideas of *Matter* and *Thought* are ſo abſolutely incompatible, that we cannot conceive, how *Omnipotence* itſelf, without altering the Nature of one or the other, could make Matter a cogitative Being, not for Want of Power in him, but for Want of Capacity in the *Subject*: But now how, he could form an *immaterial Subſtance* we are advertiſed in the Account, which the *ſacred Hiſtory* has given us of the firſt Man's Creation; (*f*) *the Lord God formed Man of the Duſt of the Earth, and breathed into his Noſtrils the Breath of Life, and Man became a living Soul.* (*g*) God's *Breathing* is a *metaphorical* Expreſſion, which denotes his immediate Production of the Soul; and from hence we may perceive, that the Soul is the only *Principle* of Life, Senſation, Knowledge, and all, that properly belongs to a reaſonable Nature, the Body no more than the *Organ* or Inſtrument of it; that the Soul is *immaterial*, becauſe it was not made of Matter, of *the Duſt of the Earth*, as the Body was, but by *the Breath of God*; and that, though it be no Part of the divine

(*b*) *Nichols*'s Conf. Vol. II. (*c*) *Nichols* ibid. (*d*) *Bentley* ibid. (*e*) 1 Tim. vi. 20.
(*f*) Gen. ii. 7. (*g*) *Sherlock* of the Immor.

vine *Eſſence*, yet it is a Kind of *natural* Production (as the *Breath* is) and nearly reſembles the Purity and Spirituality of its Maker: For, to aſſure us of its divine *Original*, the ſame Hiſtory acquaints us, that (*b*) *Man was made in the Image and Likeneſs of God*; where a little Reaſon and Philoſophy will ſatisfy us, that, as God has no Body, and therefore no external Shape or Figure, this *Image* and Similitude muſt not relate to the Body, but to the Soul of Man, and in it muſt ſignify a *ſpiritual* Reſemblance of the divine Nature and Perfections: For, as God is the *original* infinite Mind, all *intellectual* Perfections, ſuch as Knowledge, and Wiſdom, and Liberty of Choice, have the neareſt Reſemblance of him, and, as he is perfect Rectitude, Juſtice, Goodneſs, and Truth, ſuch *moral* Perfections, as the Scripture calls (*i*) *a Creation after God in Righteouſneſs and true Holineſs*, are our ſpiritual Conformity to him.

And with what natural Powers.

WHAT the *natural* Powers and Faculties of our Souls are, it would be tedious to recount and illuſtrate, and therefore to content ourſelves with one or two, *by them* (*k*) we are furniſhed with the Invention and Improvement of all Arts and Sciences of *Geometry*, *Geography*, *Aſtronomy*, and the wonderful Sagacity, that is ſhewn in the Buſineſs of *Opticks*: *By them* (*l*) we are enabled to *ranſack* and pervade the Univerſe, and to ſtretch and extend our Thoughts, till they are quite loſt in the vaſt Oceans of *Immenſity* and *Eternity*. *By them* we acquaint ourſelves with the *inviſible* World of Spirits, perceive an innumerable Company of celeſtial *Beings*, and, by Degrees, aſcend to God himſelf, that infinite Spirit, who was the *Maker* and is the *Preſerver* of all; and, laſtly, by them we find a Pleaſure and Delight, far ſurpaſſing thoſe of *Senſuality*, in the Contemplation of the divine Nature and Perfections, the Works of his Creation, the whole Compaſs of Heaven and Earth, in meditating on a future State, and the Happineſs thereof, and in thoſe pious Breathings, which devout Souls feel in themſelves after the *beatifick* Enjoyment of God: For *this Argument has the Soul of Man*, ſays *Seneca*, of *its divine Original, that it is ſo ſtrangely delighted, and ſo infinitely pleaſed with the Contemplation of divine Things, as if they were its proper Buſineſs and Concern*; and, *though we ſee not the Soul of Man*, (*m*) ſays Cicero, *as indeed neither are we able to ſee God, yet, as from the Works of God we are certain of his Being, ſo from the Faculties of the Soul, its Memory, its Invention, its Swiftneſs of Thought, its noble Exerciſe of all Virtues, we cannot but be convinced of its divine Nature and Original.*

Its Immateriality *a Proof of its* Immortality.

IF then the *intellectual* Powers, which we perceive within us, be neither *inherent* in *Matter*, as ſuch, nor *produceable* in Matter by any Motion or Modification of it; if their Exertments and Operations, their Pleaſures and Satisfactions are quite of a different Sort, from ſuch, as do ariſe from the Body, then muſt the Soul of Man, which is the Seat and Subject of all theſe, be an *incorporeal*, *ſpiritual*, *and immaterial Subſtance*; and, if immaterial, then *immortal*, becauſe, having no *Parts*, and no *Extenſion*, it is in its own Nature *indiviſible* and *incorruptible*; and, as it cannot be diſſolved by any natural Cauſes, muſt laſt, as long as Nature laſts. By the Will of God indeed it may as well be *annihilated*, as it was at firſt *created*: But when he has created an immortal Nature, which nothing, but his own immediate Power, can deſtroy, this is not only an abſolute Security againſt its natural Death and Diſſolution, but a ſufficient Argument likewiſe, that God himſelf never intended to annihilate it. And thus the Conſequence from the *Immateriality* to the *Immortality* of the Soul is very plain and natural, though even, upon the Suppoſition, that the Souls of Brutes are *immaterial*, the Difference is manifeſt, according to the Obſervation of the *Royal Preacher*, that (*n*) *the Spirit of Man goeth upward, but the Spirit of a Beaſt goeth downward to the Earth.*

Which is confirmed by ſeveral Arguments.

HUMAN Souls (as we ſhewed before) are naturally furniſhed with Cogitation, with Reaſon, with Reflection, with Foreſight, and free Choice: They are receptive of Religion, of Virtue, and Vice, and thereby capable of a proportionate Happineſs or Miſery in a future State: But none of theſe Things can be ſaid concerning *beſtial Souls*. They have no *natural* Indications of Immortality: The *Principle*, which actuates them,

(*b*) Gen. i. 26. (*i*) Eph. iv. 24. (*k*) *Durham*'s Ser. at *Boyle*'s Lect. (*l*) *Bradford*'s Ser. at *Boyle*'s Lect. (*m*) De Senec. (*n*) Eccleſ. iii. 21.

them, is purely *ſenſitive*: Their *Operations* do plainly depend upon the *organical* Texture of their Bodies, nor have they any *Happineſs* or Pleaſure, but what manifeſtly reſult from thence; and therefore, however God diſpoſes of them after Death, ſo far as we can judge, they are not capable of any Life or Senſation, when once they are ſeparated from the Body. But now the Caſe is very different in the Souls of Men. (*o*) As they are endued with higher *Faculties*, ſo are they ordained for a much nobler *End*, viz. for the Praiſe and Worſhip of God, and for the Contemplation and Imitation of his divine Perfections. Now, if there will for ever be a God ſubſiſting, for Mankind to praiſe and adore, to admire and tranſcribe his Excellencies, for ever will there be the ſame Reaſon for the *Continuance* of human Souls, as there was at firſt for their *Creation*; and, if there is the ſame Reaſon for continuing, that there was for creating them, then muſt they continue on to all Eternity in the full Exerciſe of their Faculties, and the Enjoyment of that Life, which they are capable of in a ſeparate State.

From the Affections of the Soul.

For (to pry a little farther into the *Affections* of our Souls) what means this eager Deſire of Immortality, which Nature has implanted in all Mankind? Or what poſſible Reaſon can be given, why the greateſt and braveſt Minds are ſo much concerned to propagate their Names and Memories to Poſterity, by leaving laſting Monuments of their Wit and Learning, by raiſing coſtly and magnificent Buildings, or by performing great and memorable Actions, for which no other Reward can be expected, but only that of Fame and Glory after Death? (*p*) But now, what a ſorry Reward is this, if that, which is remembered with Praiſe and Renown, is for ever itſelf extinct? Or what avails it to leave a good or a bad Report behind us, if, when we are gone, we neither feel the Glory, nor partake of the Shame of it? (*q*) There muſt be ſomething then within us, which we are conſcious will ſurvive the Fate of our Body, and, when that lies in the ſilent Grave, ſhall be ſenſible of the Honour done to our *Memory*, and enjoy the Pleaſure of a juſt and impartial *Fame*, which ſhall ſpeak of us to Poſterity without *Envy* or *Flattery*: For ſo the *Roman* Orator, ſpeaking of himſelf, and other brave Men, who had ventured their Lives for their Country, tells us, that (*r*) *if their Souls were not to be poſſeſſed of an immortal Exiſtence in the other State, they would not, in* this, *enterprize ſo great and noble Things, and aſpire ſo eagerly after an everlaſting Fame.* But, ſuppoſe that this ardent Deſire of Fame concerns but a few of Mankind; yet ſtill we may be allowed to aſk, whence is that Peace, and Quiet, and Satisfaction of Mind, which *good Men* find in virtuous Actions? Whence that ſecret Shame, and Fear, and Horror, that ſeize upon the Wicked, even when they are but contriving Miſchief in their Heart, and no Creature is privy or conſcious to it? Whence that *Courage* and Conſtancy in a virtuous Courſe, that Contempt of Life, and chearful Reſignation of it, when a Man is brought into a State of Perſecution for *Righteouſneſs Sake*? (*s*) Never yet was there a Perſon, who, at any Time, did good, and brave, and generous Things, but the Reaſon of his Mind applauded him for it, nor ever did any one commit baſe, and vile, and diſhonourable Actions, but, at the ſame Time, he condemned himſelf for them: *The one* was neceſſarily accompanied with good Hope, and an Expectation of Reward, *the other* with continual Torment, and Fear of Puniſhment: But now, whence are theſe different Reſentments, theſe Hopes and Fears, theſe Deſires and Appetites? Come they not from the Hand of our Maker, that has implanted them in us? If they do, as well may we ſuppoſe, that he has made *Eyes* without *Light*, or *Ears* without *Sounds*, as that he has given us *Appetites*, which are never to be *ſatisfied*; *Deſires*, which have no Object, to *anſwer* them; and unavoidable Apprehenſions of what ſhall never really come to paſs.

The Conſent of all Nations.

The *Conſent* of all Mankind indeed, in Regard to the Soul's Immortality, is ſo *univerſal*, that we cannot but ſuppoſe, that it was either *impreſſed* in our original Conſtitution by the Author of our Nature, or that, by a long *Tradition*, it has deſcended to us from the *Inſtitution* of our firſt Parents. For (to begin with the People of the *Eaſt*,

(*o*) *Nichols* ibid. (*p*) *Sherlock* ibid. (*q*) *Tillotſon's* Ser. Vol. III. (*r*) *Tully* de Senec.
(*s*) *Clarke's* Ser. at *Boyle's* Lect.

Eaſt, who are very probably the Poſterity of *Noah* after the Flood,) of their ancient Prieſts and wiſe Men, the *Brachmans*, it is recorded (*t*) by good Authority, that they have ſeveral *mythological* Relations concerning the Immortality of the Soul, and other Matters of the like Nature, and that they deſpiſed Death, and ſet no great Value upon Life, as being perſuaded of the *Tranſmigration* of the Soul. If we turn our Eyes *Weſtward*, and take a View of the *Gauls*, and ancient *Britons*, (*u*) they, we are told, being ſo inſtructed by their Maſters, the *Druids*, did not believe that their Souls died, but that, after Death, they paſſed from one to another, by which Perſuaſion they were much excited to Valour, and had generally a wonderful Contempt of Death. In the *North* we find (*x*) ſome of the *Thracians*, particularly the *Getes*, prodigal of their Lives from the different Opinions, that prevailed among them; *ſome* thinking, that the Souls of deceaſed Men returned to their Bodies, and *others*, that, though they did not return, yet they were not extinguiſhed, but retired into ſome happy Places. In the *South*, (*y*) the *Angilæ* are ſaid to account the Ghoſts of Men the only Gods; by theſe they ſwear; to theſe they pray; and, when they have ſo done, they lie down upon their Tombs, and whatever they dream on there, goes for an oracular Reſponſe. Nay, in Countries of *later* Diſcovery, which were never known to have held Correſpondence with theſe Parts of the World, the common Opinion, as we ſaid before, is found to be, that the Souls of ſtout and valiant Men, after Death, fly beyond the higheſt Mountains, are there gathered to their Fathers and Grandfathers, and live in pleaſant Gardens, with all Manner of Delights: And therefore well might the good old Man in *Cicero* ſay, (*z*) *O happy Day! when I ſhall go into the bleſſed Aſſembly of Spirits; depart out of the Noiſe and Confuſion of this vexatious World, and be gathered to all thoſe brave and worthy Souls, that are gone before me*; whereupon he concludes, *but, if, after all this, my Opinion concerning the Soul's Immortality ſhould chance to prove an Error, yet is it ſo delightful an Error, that I will never ſuffer myſelf to be undeceived in it.*

THUS, in all Ages of the World, and in all Nations under Heaven, the Notion of the Soul's *Immortality* was univerſally received; and yet the Firmneſs of our Belief is built upon a ſurer Foundation, and that is the *Word of God*, whoſe Teſtimony is uncontrollable. The *Jews* indeed (according to ſome Men's Sentiments) had no *explicit* Revelation of this *Article*, and therefore (*a*) the *Sadducees* denied the Exiſtence of Angels, and of all departed Spirits: But this Notion our Saviour confutes, by evincing from a Paſſage, in thoſe Books, whoſe *Authority* they themſelves acknowledged, (*b*) that the Souls of *Abraham*, *Iſaac*, and *Jacob* were then alive, and in a State of Felicity. (*c*) The more immediate *Miniſtry* of Angels, which the *Patriarchs*, both before and after the *Flood*, were ſo much accuſtomed to, muſt neceſſarily have made Way for the Belief of *immaterial* Subſtance; and the Inſtances of *Enoch* and *Elias*, who did not die like other Men, but were *tranſlated* into Heaven, could not fail of giving them Aſſurance of the *perpetual* Exiſtence and Life of Souls in the other World; even as all the *Texts*, which have been produced in Atteſtation of the Reſurrection of the Body, the Reality of a future State, and the Eternity of the Joys of Heaven, and the Torments of Hell, are a clear Proof of their *Permanency*, without which eternal and everlaſting Life is a mere *Chimæra*. *The Teſtimony of the* Scriptures *both* old,

THAT, about the Commencement of *regal* Power in the *Jewiſh* Nation, the ſeparate Exiſtence of Souls was the current Notion, is plain (*d*) from *Saul*'s going to conſult *Samuel* after his Deceaſe. For, that the *Jews* were of Opinion, that it was the *real Ghoſt* of *Samuel*, which appeared to him at *Endor*, and no Deception of the Woman, is manifeſt from that Paſſage in the Son of *Syrach*, where it is ſaid: (*e*) *that after his Death Samuel propheſied*, and ſhewed the King his End. That during the *prophetick* Age, and eſpecially towards the Expiration of the *legal* Diſpenſation, there was a fuller Revelation of this Matter, appears (*f*) from the undaunted Behaviour of the *ſeven Brethren* under

(*t*) Strabo L. 15. (*u*) Cæſ. Bell. Gall. L. 6. (*x*) Pomp. Mel. L. 2. (*y*) Pom. Mel. L. 1.
(*z*) De Senec. (*a*) Act. xxiii. 8. (*b*) Luke xx. 37, 38. (*c*) *Tillotſon*'s Ser. Vol. III.
(*d*) 1 Sam. xxviii. 3, &c. (*e*) Eccluſ. xlvi. 20. (*f*) 2 Maccab. vii. 2, &c.

under the Perſecution of *Antiochus*, to which the Author to the *Hebrews* alludes, in telling us, that, when they were tortured, (*g*) *they refuſed to accept of Deliverance, in Hopes of obtaining a better Reſurrection*; and that this was the Catholick Perſuaſion at that Time, their ancient *Doxology*, or Form of Thankſgiving, commonly called the *Song of the three Children*, is an abundant Demonſtration: for, having called upon the *chief* of God's Works to join together in his Praiſe, after the mention of ſuch good Men, as were then alive, the next Invocation is, (*h*) *O ye Spirits, and Souls* of the Righteous, bleſs ye the Lord, praiſe him, *and magnify him for ever!*

And New. THUS were the *Jews*, by one Means or other, ſufficiently convinced of the Immortality of the Soul; but it muſt be acknowledged, that, by the *Light of the Goſpel* we have a clearer Diſcovery of this, than they ever had, and therefore, when we find our bleſſed Maſter giving us this Advice—(*i*) *Fear not them, that kill the Body, but are not able to kill the Soul*; (*k*) *commending his* own *Spirit*, (which was of the ſame Nature with ours) into the *Hands* of his *heavenly Father*, and, in the Parable of the *rich Man* and *Lazarus*, repreſenting the ſeparate Subſiſtence of Souls, and the Perception they have of their happy or unhappy Condition after Death: When we find his Apoſtle St. *Paul* affirming, that, (*l*) *while we are at Home in the Body, we are abſent from* the Lord, praying for the *Theſſalonians*, that (*m*) *their whole Spirit, and Soul, and Body might be preſerved unto the coming of the Lord Jeſus*; and telling his *Coloſſians*, that, (*n*) *when Chriſt, who is their Life, ſhall appear, then ſhall they alſo appear with him in Glory*: when we find that other Apoſtle St. *Peter* telling the *Jewiſh* Converts, that (*o*) *the Time was come, that Judgment muſt begin at the Houſe of God*, and therefore *let them, that ſuffer according to his Will, commit the keeping of their Souls to him in Well-doing, as unto a faithful Creator*: When we find the (*p*) two deceaſed Prophets, *Moſes*, and *Elias* ſhewing themſelves at Chriſt's *Tranſfiguration* on the Mount; (*q*) *many Bodies of Saints, which ſlept, ariſing and coming out of their Graves after his Reſurrection*; and (*r*) *the Souls of them, who were ſlain for the Word of God, crying under the Altar, and ſaying, How long, O Lord, holy and true,* doſt *thou not judge and avenge our Blood on them, that dwell on the Earth?* When we find theſe, I ſay, and many more Things of the like Nature, recorded in the Books of the Goſpel, the Matter muſt be beyond all Controverſy clear, that one conſtituent Part of our Compoſition is not ſubject to the Stroke of Death; that our Souls ſurvive the Fate of our Bodies, and, in a ſeparate State, ſubſiſt under the divine Care and Cuſtody; and that, when they are diſſolved from the Body, being of an exalted Nature, *they go upward*, they (*s*) *return unto God, that gave them*, and are lodged in ſuch *Receptacles*, as his Providence has provided for them, until the *general* Reſurrection, and *final* Judgment, when their everlaſting Weal or Woe commences; and of this, though the *Heathen* might know *ſomething* by *Tradition* or rational *Deductions*, and the *Jews more* by the Diſpenſation of their Law, yet we *Chriſtians* have the moſt clear and expreſs Revelation of it, in thoſe ſacred Writings, where all the Precepts and Prohibitions, the Threats and Promiſes, the Diſſuaſives from Sin, and Excitements to Virtue, *all*, that we have to fear, and *all*, that we have to hope for in the other World, do *ultimately* turn upon this one Point, *the Immortality of our Souls.*

A Recapitulation *of the whole.*

" AND thus we have finiſhed our *Ex-*
" *poſition* of the *twelfth*, and laſt Article
" of the *Apoſtles Creed*, expreſſed *by the*
" *Life everlaſting*, wherein we profeſs to
" believe moſt ſtedfaſtly, that, as the
" Soul, in its Nature, is *immortal*, and
" exempted from the Fate of the Body,
" ſo, whenever this ſhort life is ended,
" there muſt *neceſſarily* be a future State
" of Exiſtence, wherein the *virtuous* ſhall
" be happy, and the *wicked* miſerable;
" that the *Beginnings* of this Happineſs or
" Miſery may poſſibly be in the inter-
" mediate State between Death and Judg-
" ment, but will not be properly and fully
" entered upon, till after the *Reſurrection*,
" when

(*g*) Heb. xi. 25 (*h*) Ver. 64. (*i*) Matt. x. 28. (*k*) Luke xxiii. 46. (*l*) 2 Cor. v. 6.
(*m*) 1 Theſſ. v. 23. (*n*) Col. iii. 4. (*o*) 1 Pet. iv. 17, 19. (*p*) Matt. xvii. 3. (*q*) Matt. xxvii. 52.
(*r*) Rev. vi. 9, 10. (*s*) Eccl. xii. 7.

" when both Body and Soul, being re-
" united, and summoned before the *Judg-*
" *ment Seat of Christ*, shall there receive
" their final Sentence; that the Wicked
" shall then be consigned to a Place of in-
" conceivable Torments, which the divine
" Justice shall never cease to inflict, nor
" they be unable to bear, to all Eternity,
" while the Righteous shall be filled with
" inexpressible Happiness, in the Presence
" of God, the Fountain of Bliss, and
" have that Happiness confirmed to them
" in an absolute Security of an ever-
" lasting Enjoyment of it; and, lastly,
" that, though the Enjoyment of the
" Blessed, and the Punishment of the Re-
" probate are both to be *eternal*, and,
" in Point of *Duration*, the *same*, yet, in
" their several *Degrees*, they will be *differ-*
" *ent*, and (to make the divine Justice
" conspicuous) proportioned to the Merit
" or Demerit of each *Recipient*: the pro-
" per Effect of all which is——to ob-
" lige us to *believe* in Earnest the Im-
" mortality of our Souls, to *live* under
" a perpetual Sense thereof, and, above
" all Things, to *labour* after their Preser-
" vation, because nothing on Earth can
" *compensate* their Loss: *with Regard to a*
" *future State*, to wean our Affections from
" the Trifles of this Life, (*t*) *not looking at*
" *the Things, which are seen, but at the*
" *Things, which are not seen, because the*
" *Things, which are seen, are temporal, but*
" *the Things, which are not seen, are eternal:*
" To encourage us to bear Afflictions with
" *Patience*, because this *Scene* of Life
" will soon be shifted, and Death with
" *Magnanimity*, because it is but a Pas-
" sage, though somewhat *difficult*, to another
" Life, and has nothing in it to dismay us
" in our Way to everlasting Bliss: *With*
" *Regard to future Punishment*, to cre-
" ate in us a proper Awe and Dread of
" the just Judgments of God, who is
" a *consuming Fire*, (*u*) and, *after he hath*
" *killed, has Power to cast into Hell*; to
" deter us from the Commission of Sin,
" which, being a Breach of the divine
" Law, deserves eternal Death, and pro-
" vokes even *Mercy* itself to punish with
" such Severity; and to engage our Thank-
" fulness to God for making the *Sanction*
" of his Laws so binding upon us, whom
" Vengeance only can reclaim, and terrors
" allure from the Pursuit of Wickedness;
" and, lastly, *with Regard to future Hap-*
" *piness*, to excite in us an earnest Desire
" of the *Kingdom of Heaven*, and of that
" *Righteousness*, which alone is the Qua-
" lification for it; to provoke us (*x*) *to*
" *add to our Faith Virtue, and to Vir-*
" *tue Knowledge, and to Knowledge Tem-*
" *perance*, &c. because the *Degree* of our
" Felicity will be in Proportion to our
" present Attainments of Goodness: to be-
" get in us a stedfast Hope, and *Heavenly-*
" *Mindedness*, having always *the Mark of*
" *our high Calling* in View, and breathing
" earnestly after the State of blessed Souls,
" the glorious *Sabbatism* above; and, last-
" ly, to stir us up to Acts of the de-
" voutest Praise and Adoration to the di-
" vine Bounty, for appointing so transcen-
" dent a Felicity for such vile and undeserv-
" ing Creatures: And therefore unto him,
" who, by his Blessing, and gracious As-
" sistance, has carried me, *who am less than*
" *the least* of his Servants, through this
" great and arduous Work, (*y*) *unto him,*
" *that is able to do exceeding abundantly,*
" *above all that we can ask, or think,*
" *according to the Power that worketh in*
" *us, unto him be Glory, in the Church,*
" *by Jesus Christ, throughout all Ages, World*
" *without End.* Amen."

(*t*) 2 Cor. iv. 18. (*u*) Luke xii. 5. (*x*) 2 Pet. i. 5, 6. (*y*) Eph. iii. 20, 21.

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